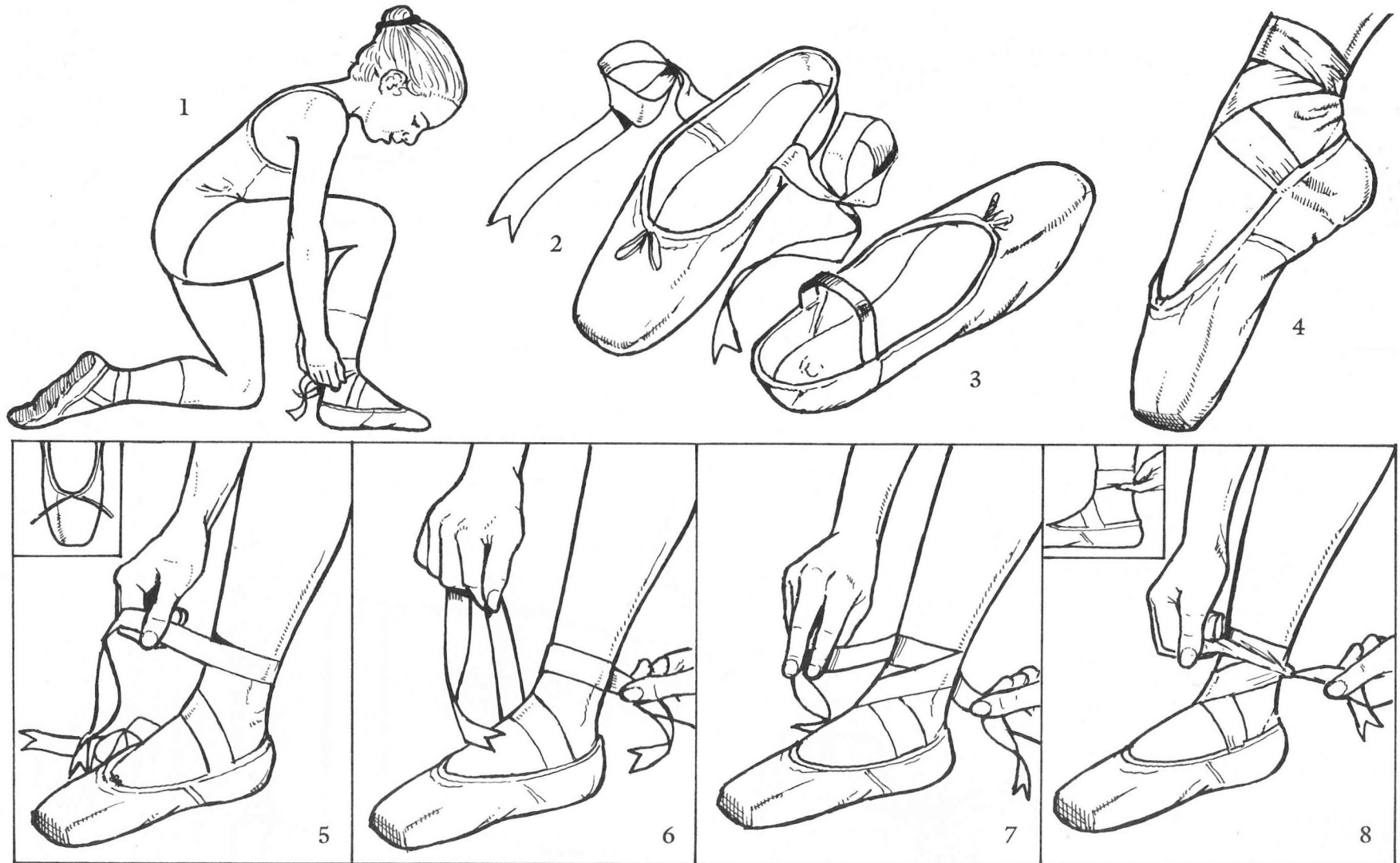


### CLOTHING FOR CLASS

Clothing designed especially for ballet class is made of lightweight, stretchable fabric and takes the shape of the body. This allows great ease of movement and also makes the outline of the body visible, so the teacher can ensure correct technique. Boys wear heavy black tights, white T-shirts, white socks, and black or white ballet shoes (1).

Girls usually wear leotards (most often black, though sometimes other colors), pink tights, and pink ballet shoes. Sometimes a short, sheer skirt is worn for class. The younger girl shown (2) wears a short skirt attached to her leotard. The older girl (3) wears a "unitard," combining leotard and tights.



### SHOES AND RIBBONS

Proper fit of the ballet shoe is very important. It must fit the foot much more snugly than a regular shoe—much like a glove, in fact. This girl (figure 1) is putting on soft-soled ballet shoes. Some schools require ribbons (2), but others prefer elastic (3) as a means of keeping the shoe on securely. Satin point shoes (4) always are secured with both elastic and ribbons. The inset drawing in figure 5 shows the shoe's casing and the string that runs through it. This is

tied, knotted, and always tucked in. The ribbons are tied (5 and 6) with the inside ribbon crossing over the front of the foot, continuing around the back of the ankle, then wrapping around once and finishing on the inside. The outside ribbon (7) follows the same pattern in the opposite direction. The ribbons then are tightly knotted (8) and the ends are tucked in neatly.



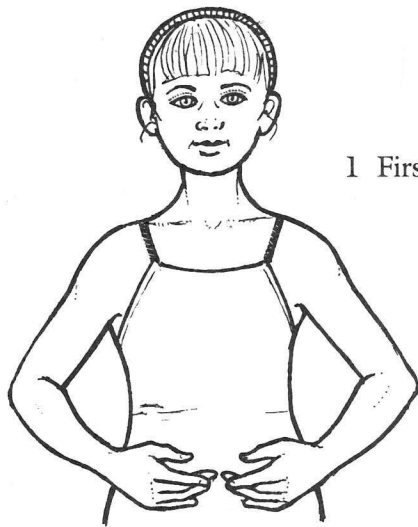
1

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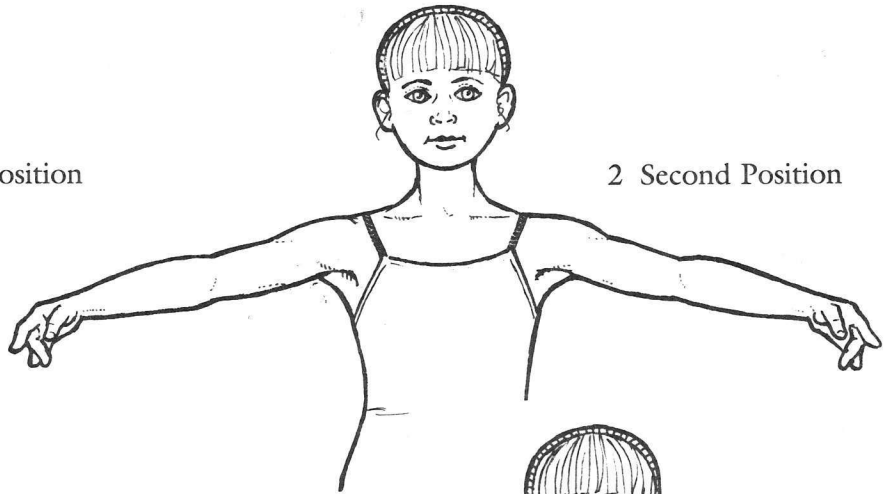
### POSTURE AND PLACEMENT

The first and most important lesson learned in ballet class defines the dancer's posture, which is different from the way we ordinarily stand. The term placement refers to the way in which the dancer's head, arms, legs, and body are placed in relation to one another in any pose or movement. The basis of every movement in ballet is correct posture and placement. In correct ballet posture the body is centered and the weight is forward over the balls of the feet. The muscles at the base of the spine are pulled down

and in, and the abdomen is pulled in and up. The muscles of the thighs and knees are pulled up. The hips and shoulders are level and face the same direction. The upper body is lifted. The shoulders remain down and the head is erect. Here we see a dancer with proper posture and placement in first position, with arms in the preparatory position (1), and then doing an exercise with the leg and foot extended or "pointed" to the front (2).



1 First Position



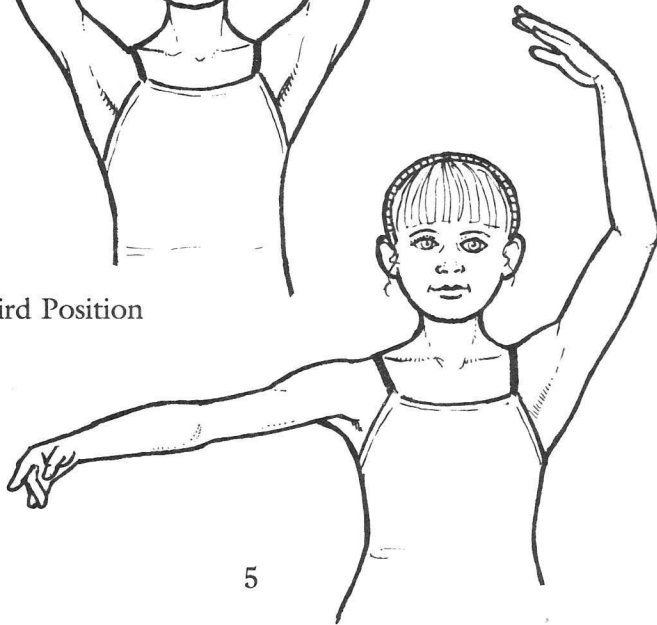
2 Second Position



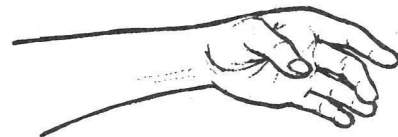
3 Third Position



4



5



6

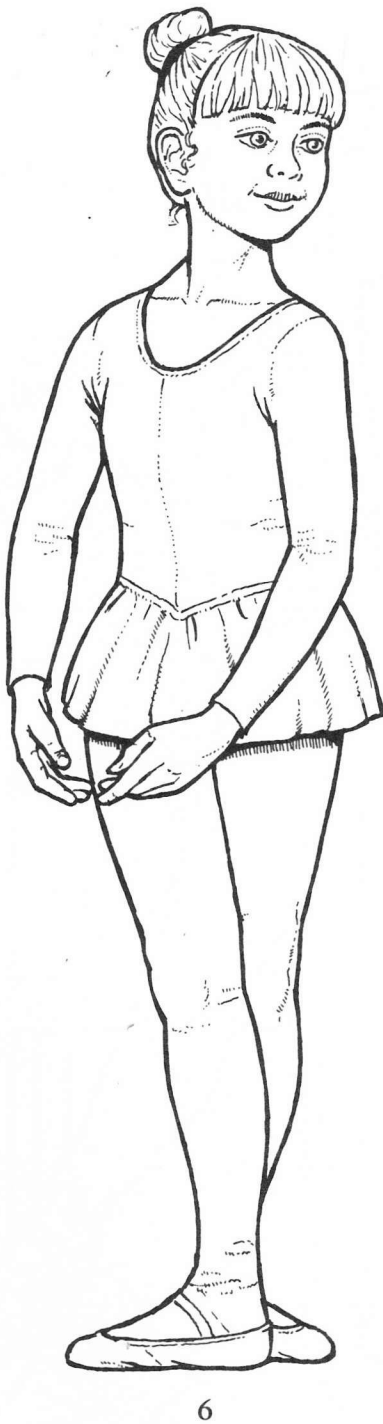


7

### ARM POSITIONS

The use of the arms in ballet is very important. The arms add stability and great beauty of line. There are three basic arm positions in the Russian school, five in the French school. In each, the arms are rounded, the shoulders down, the hands and wrists softly held, and the body and head lifted. In first position (1), the rounded arms are forward, elbows lifted, fingers waist high. In second position (2), the curved arms open to the side from the shoulder. Note the descending line of the arm: shoulder to

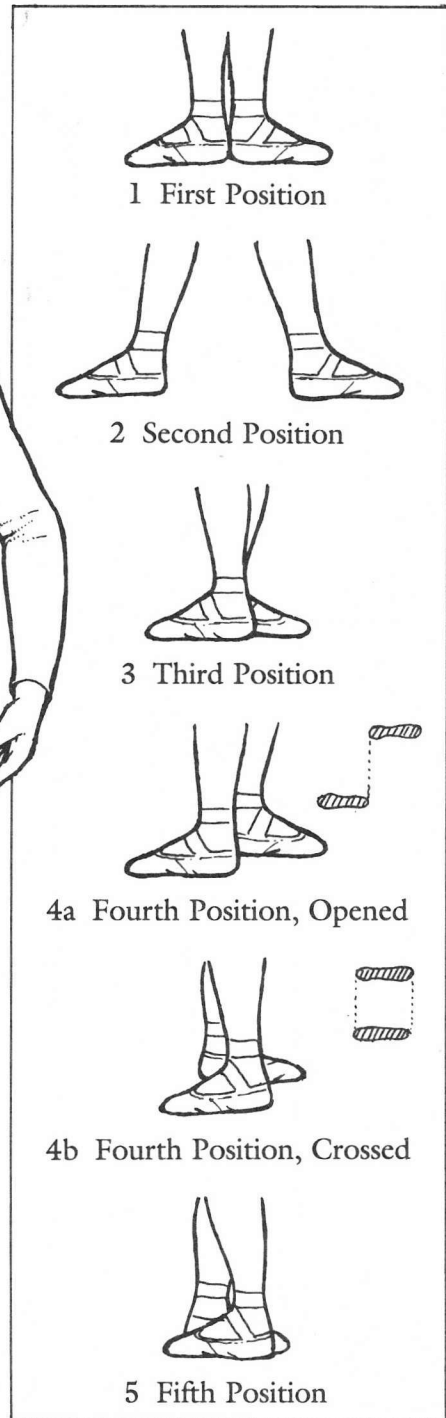
elbow to wrist to fingers. In third position (3) of the Russian school, both rounded arms are raised, not directly above the head, but slightly forward. Figures 4 and 5 show combinations of these three positions, as they are used in the French school. In figure 4, the left arm is in first position, the right arm in second position. In figure 5, the left arm is in third position, the right arm in second position. The basic "soft" hand position is shown in 6 and the allongé (outstretched) position in 7.



6



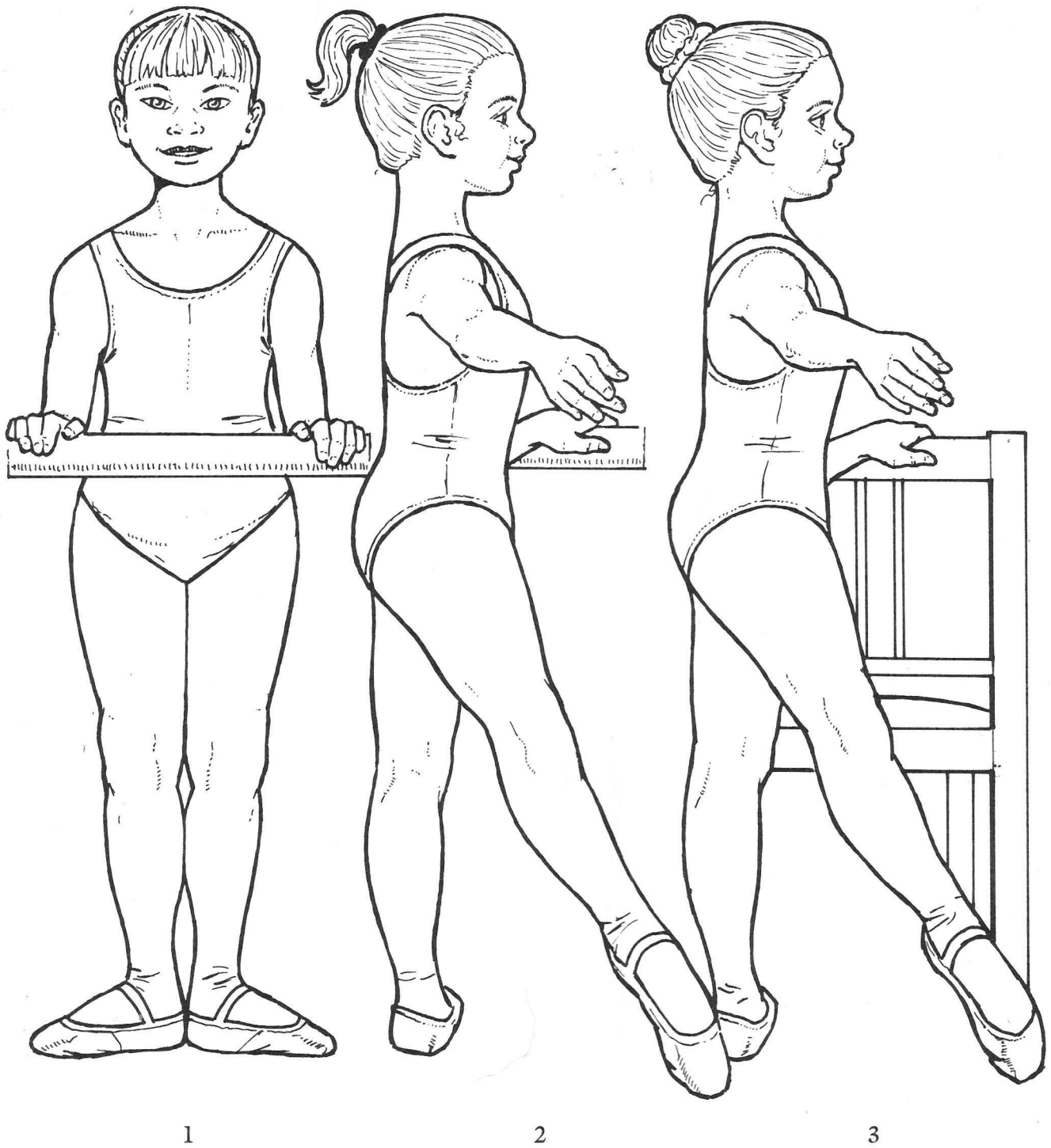
7



### FOOT POSITIONS

In ballet there are five basic positions of the feet. In all five the weight is carried evenly by both feet, the legs and feet are turned out according to the dancer's ability, and the feet are held in place (not allowed to roll). In first position (1), the heels are together. In second position (2), the feet are opened with the heels under the shoulders. In third (3), the heel of the front foot rests against the center of the back foot. In fourth opened (4a), the front foot is moved forward from first position; in fourth crossed (4b), the front foot is moved forward from fifth position. In fifth (5), one foot is directly in front of the other, with

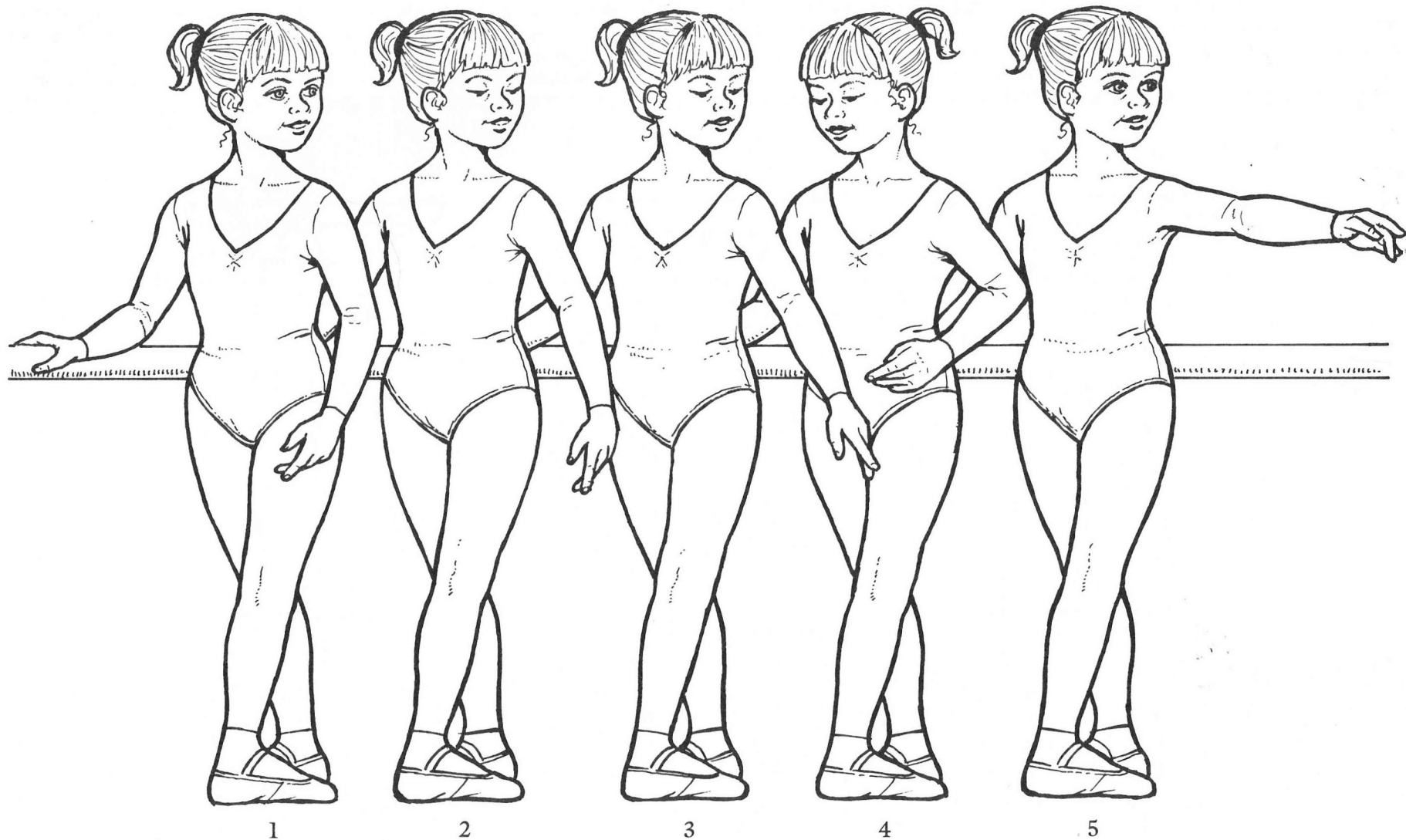
the heel of the front foot touching the big toe of the back foot. The dancer's body may be turned in any of several directions: straight forward (*en face*); facing a corner of the dance studio or stage (*croisé*, which means crossed); turned away (*effacé*); thrown open (*écarté*); or facing the side (*de côté*). The working foot (the foot that moves through the steps) and the head may face in a different direction than the body. Both students seen here are facing a corner: figure 6 shows *effacé devant* (facing a front corner) and figure 7 shows *croisé devant* (turned away to the front).



### BARRE WORK

Every class begins with work at the barre, the rounded wooden rod attached to the wall in the ballet studio. Class begins with a set of exercises designed to gradually warm up, stretch, and strengthen the body. The barre gives support and aids proper balance. Barre work is done facing the barre (1) or with the side to the barre (2). The girl in

figure 3 is practicing at home, using the back of a chair as a barre. Exercises are done first with one side of the body next to the barre, then with the other side next to it. The barre is held at waist height with the hand resting lightly on the barre. During barre work, correct posture must be used.



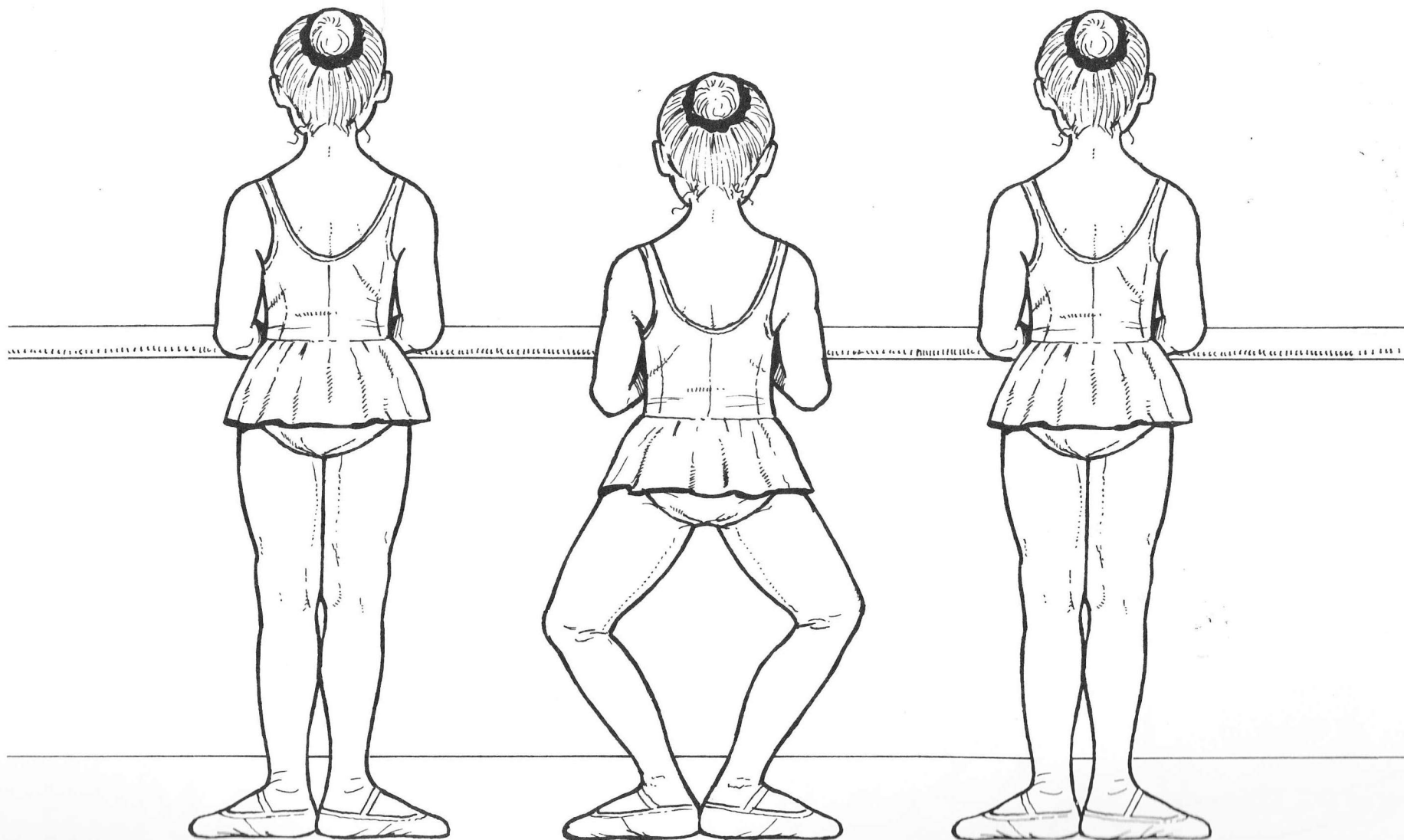
### PREPARATORY ARM MOVEMENT

Most barre work is done with one side of the body to the barre. Before an exercise begins at the barre in this position, there is a preparatory arm movement. We see this student with her feet in fifth position, her arm in what is called the preparatory position, and her body correctly held (1). She begins by moving her arm slightly away from the body as if taking a breath (2 and 3).

6 The movement goes outward from the shoulder, the elbow leading, the wrist

and hand soft and fluid. The arm returns to the preparatory position, then moves through first position (4), fingers waist high, and opens to second position (5). Throughout the movement, the arm is rounded and slopes gently downward from the shoulder. The head and eye movements follow the hand. The movement is fluid and does not stop until the arm reaches second position.



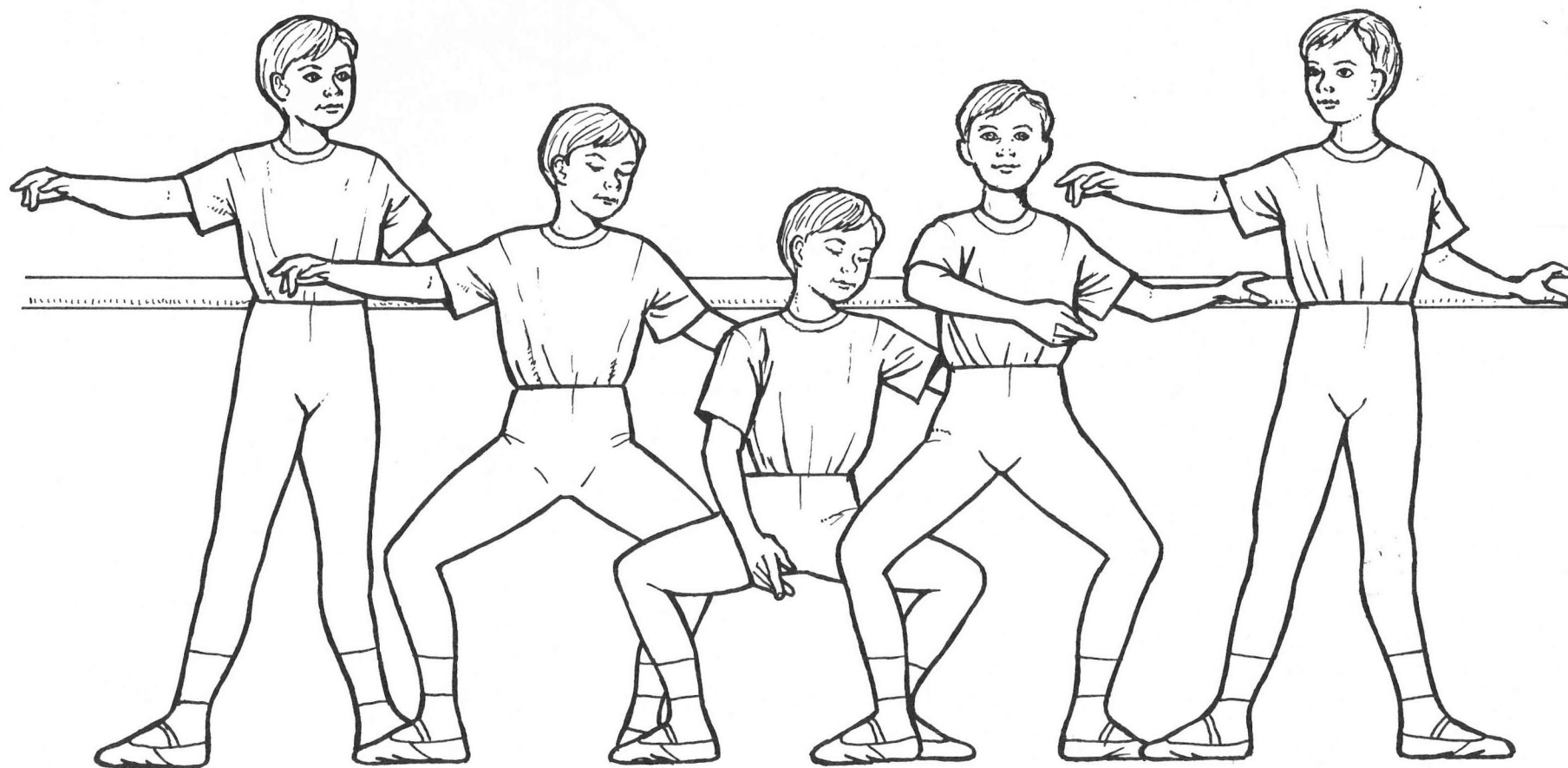


### DEMI-PLIÉ

This exercise, plié (from *plier*, to bend) is a slow, continuous bending and straightening of the legs. It is the first exercise done at the barre to warm up and stretch the legs. There are two forms of plié: demi-plié (small) and grand plié (deep). Pliés are done in all five positions. This student shows us the most basic and first-learned plié: demi-plié in first position. She faces the barre, eyes,

shoulders, and hips facing forward, feet in first, hands resting lightly on the barre. As the knees bend, they move outward so that they are directly over the toes. The heels remain on the floor and the correct stance is maintained. As the plié reaches its lowest point, it does not "sit," but begins to rise. Demi-plié is part of many steps, and every jump begins and ends in demi-plié.

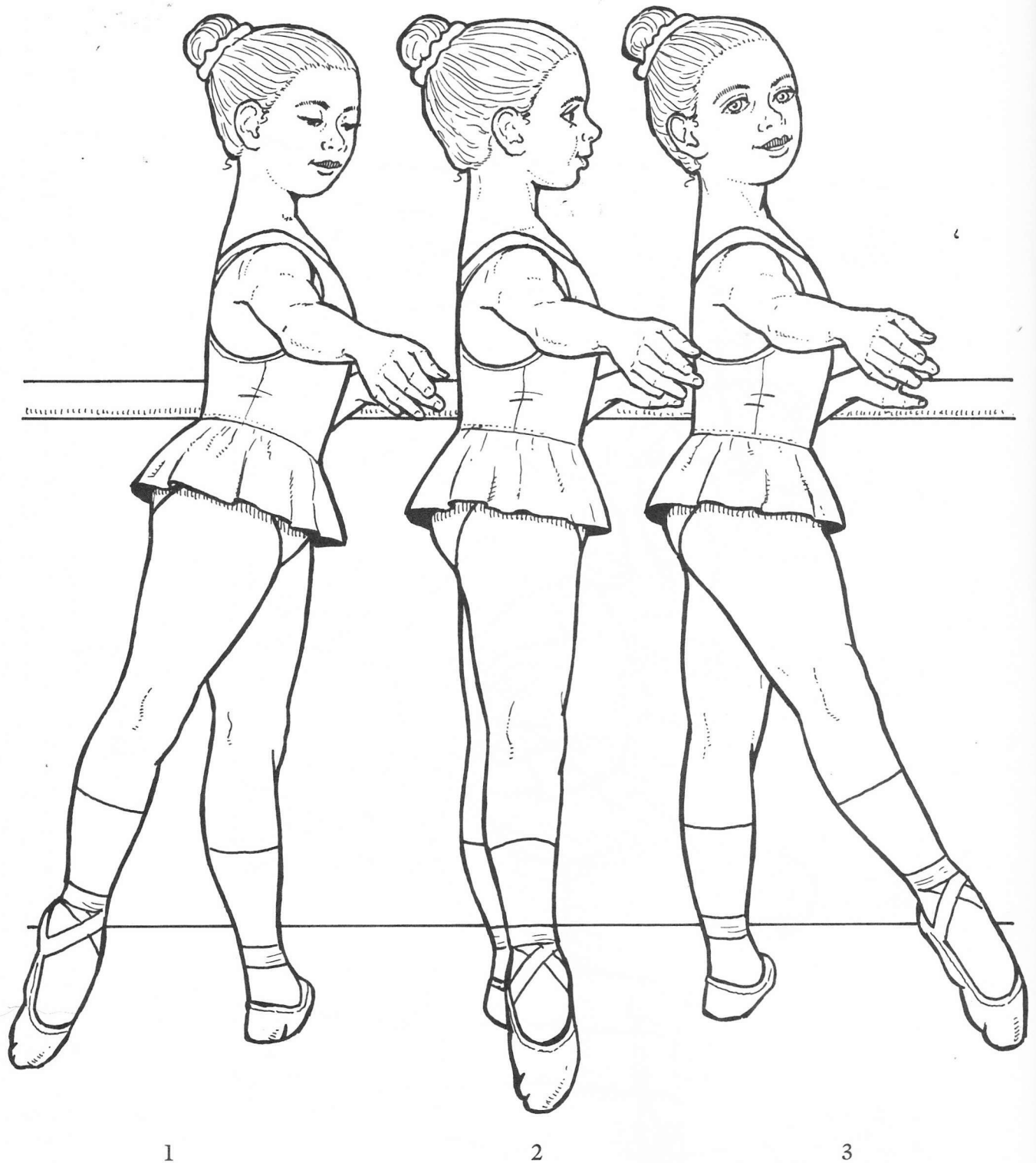




### GRAND PLIÉ

II In this grand plié in second position, we see the port de bras (arm movement) that is most often done with both demi and grand plié. As the legs bend and turn out, the arm, after a very slight lift, moves slowly from second to the preparatory position. As the legs and body begin to lift upward, the arm

reaches forward and up to first, then opens to second as the body returns to a standing position. The head and eyes follow the hand. Their movements are an essential part of the port de bras. Throughout the plié the head, arms, and legs work together as parts of a single continuous movement.



1

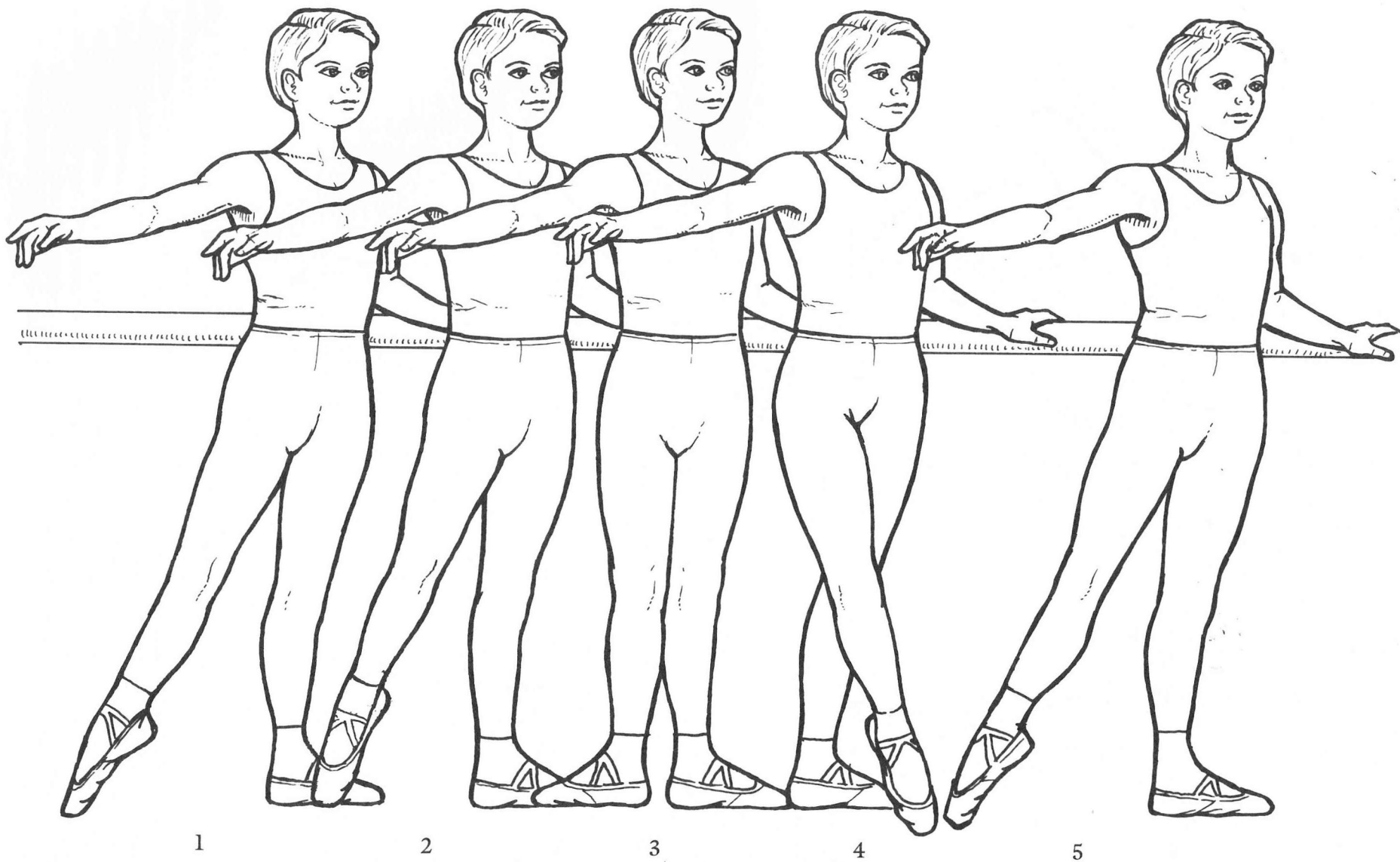
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3

### BATTEMENT TENDU

Tendu means stretched. In battement tendu the leg extends outward from, and returns to a position of, first or fifth. Tendu stretches and strengthens the leg and foot and develops turn-out (the rotation of the leg outward from the hip). This student shows us battement tendu in three directions: (1) en arrière (back); (2) à la seconde (side), and (3) en avant (front). In battement tendu the foot of the working leg slides outward in a straight line

until the leg and foot are fully extended and turned out. The heel leaves the floor first, then the ball of the foot. The toes remain lightly touching the floor. The weight is entirely on the supporting leg. The hips and shoulders remain forward and level, and the muscles of both legs are pulled tight. The body and arm must be held correctly throughout.



### ROND DE JAMBE À TERRE

Rond de jambe à terre means "circle of the leg on the ground." It is done to improve turn-out. As the leg moves in rond de jambe, it traces a semicircle or a capital letter D on the floor. It can be done in two directions: en dehors (outward) and en dedans (inward). This student has prepared for rond de jambe en dehors by extending his leg forward and circling his leg from the front to

the side (1). He continues by moving the leg to the back (2), then brings the leg in a straight line into first position (3). As he begins another rond de jambe, the leg extends forward (4) and circles to the side (5). Throughout, the body is correctly held, the hips stay level and forward, the legs remain straight and turned out, and the toes of the working leg always lightly touch the floor.