

The Nutcracker

YEARS 3 & 4

Strands Making (Choreography and Performance) and Responding (Appreciation)

Prior Knowledge Knowledge, understanding and application of elements of dance as applicable in Prep to Year 2.

General Capabilities Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability.

Access or download these free classroom resources to complement this Activity Sheet:

BALLET BOOK	<i>The Nutcracker</i>
VIDEO	<i>The Nutcracker — Highlights</i>
FLASHCARDS	1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 1.4.1, 1.4.2, 1.5.1

ACTIVITY 1

- As a class, read the story of *The Nutcracker*.
- As a class, list the main characters mentioned in the story and write them down as this will be referred to later in the lesson. Examples of characters include: Clara, Dolls, Mice, Snowflakes, Sugar Plum Fairy.
- As a class, brainstorm descriptive words for each character and list below each character's name.
- Lead a warm up game 'The Mice are coming!'. Students move around the space dancing to the music. When the music stops, call out 'The Mice are coming!'. Students freeze and reply 'How many?'. Students form groups of the number called out. Continue this activity until students are in small groups of approximately four or five.
- Allocate each group one of the characters listed after reading the story. In groups, students create two freeze frames which represent their character. Students can refer back to the descriptive words they listed for assistance.
- Each group shares their two freeze frames with the rest of the class.
- Give each group two of the 'space' cards from the QB Flashcards series.
- Using one 'space' card for each freeze frame, students manipulate each of their freeze frames using the spacial element. For example, make one of their shapes asymmetrical and another angular.
- Share the manipulated freeze frames with the class, and ask students to discuss what happened to their character; would they describe them differently now?

Viewpoint Questions

- How can movement be used in order to convey aspects of different characters?
- How can the different shapes be used to communicate a character?

Extension Activity

- As a class, discuss transitions and how the freeze frame can become movement using transitions.
- Demonstrate some examples of transitions using action words such as walk, turn, roll.
- As a group, link each of the freeze frames to create a small movement sequence. As an added option this sequence can be performed to music from *The Nutcracker*.

Arts Learning Area, Dance Subject Content Descriptions (version 8.2)

- Improvise and structure movement ideas for dance sequences using the elements of dance and choreographic devices (ACADAM005)

Example Assessment Task

This activity could be used as a Making (Choreography) assessment where students are required to create a phrase of movement in order to communicate meaning.



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ACTIVITY 2

- As a class, watch *The Nutcracker* highlights video.
- As a class, discuss which aspects of the video students found most interesting or memorable. What costumes did they see? What objects came to life?
- Students think about what toys they have at home and write a list on the board.
- Lead a warm up game, 'Rummaging through the Toy Box'. Using the toys listed on the board as stimulus, students spread out around the room and pretend to search in a toy box while the teacher calls out the name of a toy and its corresponding action for the students to respond to. Examples include:
 - Jump like a jack-in-the-box
 - March like a soldier
 - Spin like a top
 - Twist like a slinky
- In pairs, students select one of the toys listed on the board. Complete a 'Think Pair Share' activity. Students write down the actions they think their toy might do if it was to come to life, then share this with their partner. Students select and write down four action words.
- In pairs, students create four movements representing each of their action words.
- In pairs, students join their four movements together using a transition between each movement.
- Share the short movement sequence with the class.

Viewpoint Questions

- How can everyday objects be used in order to inspire movement?
- How do costumes help communicate the role of a character?

Extension Activity

- Each pair of students can join with another pair and teach their short movement sequence to create a longer routine with four dancers.
- Students create a costume design for the toy character they have created.

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