

Dance activities – unit 1

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children explore basic body actions, *eg jumping and turning*, and use different parts of their body to make movements. They create and repeat short dances inspired by themes such as clowns, penguins and folk dance.

In dance as a whole, children think about how to use movement to explore and communicate ideas and issues, and their own feelings and thoughts. As they work, they develop an awareness of the historical and cultural origins of different dances.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit lays the foundations for future dance units, in which children will explore a wider range of dance. They will look at how different body actions show moods and feelings, and will learn how to use different parts of the body to imitate and lead movements. They will also create short dances, perform with a partner, and use language associated with movement to evaluate and improve their dances.

Many of the actions and skills that children use in this dance unit will also be used in gymnastic activities, *eg work on remembering movement phrases and short dances will be supported by work on movement phrases in gymnastics*.

VOCABULARY

In this unit children will have an opportunity to use a range of words and phrases, such as:

- words to describe travel and stillness, *eg gallop, skip, jump, hop, bounce, spring, turn, spin, freeze, statue*
- words to describe direction, *eg forwards, backwards, sideways*
- words to describe space, *eg near, far, in and out, on the spot, own*
- beginning, middle, end
- words to describe moods and feelings (expressive qualities), *eg jolly, stormy*
- words to describe the nature of movement (dynamic qualities), *eg fast, strong, gentle*

RESOURCES

- a cassette or CD player
- video camera and playback equipment
- percussion instruments
- an electronic keyboard and drum-kit
- a variety of stimuli (starting points for dance), *eg words, stories, poems, pictures, objects, videos, music*

EXPECTATIONS

When carrying out the type of activities and tasks in this unit

most children will be able to:

perform basic body actions; use different parts of the body singly and in combination; show some sense of dynamic, expressive and rhythmic qualities in their own dance; choose appropriate movements for different dance ideas; remember and repeat short dance phrases and simple dances; move with control; vary the way they use space; describe how their lungs and heart work when dancing; describe basic body actions and simple expressive and dynamic qualities of movement

some children will not have made so much progress. They will be able to:

explore basic body actions; begin to make single movements and combine movements using different parts of the body; practise moving expressively and clearly; try to choose movements that reflect the dance idea; with help, remember, repeat and link movement phrases and dances; recognise when they feel out of breath when dancing; recognise and describe some body actions and some expressive and dynamic qualities of movement

some children will have progressed further. They will be able to:

perform more complicated combinations of movement fluently and with control; perform clearly and expressively; show an awareness of phrasing and music; choose movements that show a clear understanding of the dance idea; say why their heart beats faster and their temperature rises when dancing; talk about dance using a range of descriptive language

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

ACQUIRING AND DEVELOPING SKILLS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to explore movement ideas and respond imaginatively to a range of stimuli to move confidently and safely in their own and general space, using changes of speed, level and direction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the children to copy and explore basic body actions, <i>eg travel, jump, turn, gesture, stillness</i>. Give them a range of stimuli, <i>eg words, poetry, pictures, sounds and objects</i>, and ask them to respond with different actions. Ask the children to use different parts of the body to respond to stimuli, <i>eg jumping jacks (curled shapes to big jumps), long and wide jumps, wide eyes, wide fingers</i>. Teach the children to copy movements and movement patterns, <i>eg follow the leader's walking and skipping patterns</i>. To develop their range of movements, encourage the children to watch and copy other people's dance actions. Help them to change the speed of their movement, <i>eg clowns running fast then tumbling slowly</i>, and the way they make their movements, <i>eg penguins flapping their wings lightly and waddling heavily, then flapping their wings heavily and waddling lightly</i>. Encourage them to move in different directions and at different levels without bumping into other children. |
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- respond to different stimuli with a range of actions
- copy and explore basic body actions demonstrated by the teacher
- copy simple movement patterns from each other and explore the movement

- In every lesson, most of the children's learning should take place through physical activity relating to the core tasks.**
- Most lessons should start with short warm-up activities that help the children remember what they did in the last lesson and prepare them for what they will learn next. Most lessons should end with cool-down activities.
- Give the children enough time to try out and practise their ideas and movements. They should also have time to talk about dance ideas, stimuli, what they have done, and what they could do in the future.
- Make sure the children have an opportunity to watch others, talk about what they see and copy movements. This could include watching videos of professional dance.
- Give the children specific guidance on what they are doing and how to do it, as well as general feedback and praise.
- Using electronic keyboards and drum-kits can be a good way to store different rhythmic patterns for the children to respond to.

SELECTING AND APPLYING SKILLS, TACTICS AND COMPOSITIONAL IDEAS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to compose and link movement phrases to make simple dances with clear beginnings, middles and ends to perform movement phrases using a range of body actions and body parts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the children to choose some of the movements they have already explored and use them to make their own movement phrases, <i>eg clowns balance, tumble and fall</i>. Help them to practise, link and repeat movements and movement phrases, emphasising the rhythmic and dynamic qualities, <i>eg swirling, spinning turns, softly melting, slowly sinking</i>. Ask the children to show that they have clear starting and finishing positions, and to start and stop in a controlled way, <i>eg move and stop to a percussion instrument, or play musical statues</i>. Ask them to include simple changes of speed and teach them to move safely in and through the space. Encourage them to perform their movement phrases and short dances with control and accuracy. Help the children to see how movements can show different moods, ideas and feelings. Encourage them to respond to different music. |
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- choose movements to make into their own phrases with beginnings, middles and ends
- practise and repeat their movement phrases and perform them in a controlled way

- Health and safety**
- Are the children wearing footwear and clothing that are safe and help their learning?
 - Is the space safe and clear enough to work in?
 - Are the children aware of others in the class when they are moving around?
 - Have all the children warmed up and cooled down properly?

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF FITNESS AND HEALTH

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognise how their body feels when still and when exercising | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to the children about what happens to their breathing when they are moving quickly and when they are standing still. Ask them where their heart is. Help them to describe what happens to their heartbeat after dance activities and when they are standing still. |
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- know where their heart is and understand why it beats faster when exercising

EVALUATING AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to talk about dance ideas inspired by different stimuli to copy, watch, and describe dance movement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach the children to sit, watch each other dancing and talk about their dances. Encourage them to explain how the dances make them feel. Help the children to watch and describe actions and different qualities of movement. Ask them to describe what body actions they see and what body parts are being used. Ask them why they think particular actions have been chosen for a dance. Ask the children to talk about how they might be more expressive in their movement. |
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- use simple dance vocabulary to describe movement
- talk about dance, linking movement to moods, ideas and feelings

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- followed simple instructions
- moved using simple rhythms
- explored basic body actions
- watched and talked about movement
- had some experience of action songs and action rhymes

CORE TASK

Following are core tasks the children could be asked to carry out.

Task 1

Create, perform and share short dances based on themes such as:

- clowns – funny walking patterns, balancing, tumbling, jumping, falling
- penguins – huddling, flapping, waddling
- folk dance patterns – dancing in a circle, skipping to the centre and out, clapping and stamping a pattern on the spot, walking backwards and forwards in a chain

Make sure you can remember how to start and finish your dance, and what shapes or actions you have in the middle. Make sure these are always the same.

Adaptations and variations on the task

To make the task easier:

- use ideas the children are familiar with
- make the movement phrases short and keep actions simple
- use simple accompaniment
- ask the children to work on their own
- use small spaces and similar heights and directions

To make the task harder:

- use more abstract stimuli
- make the movement phrases longer and actions more complicated
- use more complex rhythms, including changes of speed
- work in small groups
- use larger spaces and different heights and directions

Other dance ideas that could be explored include shapes, squares and circles; *Singing in the Rain*; *Teddy Bear's Picnic*; or *The Scarecrow*.

EXTENSION AND ENRICHMENT

Out of lessons, at home and in the community, children could be encouraged to:

- practise action songs and movement games in the playground
- get involved in school dance clubs
- copy and take part in social dances in the home and community, *eg at religious festivals and family celebrations*
- watch dance on television and video, *eg musicals and popular dance*
- see dance at the theatre, *eg pantomimes and ballets*, and begin to develop a sense of theatre

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

This unit could be linked to:

- language – learning new vocabulary
- mathematics – developing spatial awareness and counting skills
- music – developing awareness of rhythm
- PSHE – developing children's awareness of others
- science – understanding the body

