

Gymnastic activities – unit 4

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children create sequences that include changes of level and speed, and focus on using different body shapes clearly. They work mostly with a partner or in a small group.

In gymnastics as a whole, children use skills and agilities individually, in combination and in sequence, with the aim of showing as much control and precision as possible.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit lays the foundations for gymnastics in year 5, when children will make up longer, more complex sequences and will concentrate on preparing for display. They will extend their range of actions, balances, body shapes and agilities, working on more difficult combinations. They will match, mirror and canon actions with a partner or small group, using the floor and more challenging apparatus.

In all physical education units, children will develop their understanding of how muscles work, paying particular attention to how gymnastics develops strength and suppleness. They will use their knowledge and understanding of what makes a good performance to suggest how work could be improved.

VOCABULARY

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

- rotation, 90°, 180°, 270°
- spinning
- axis
- strength, suppleness, stamina
- combine
- approaching, leaving
- height
- inversion
- against, towards, away, across

RESOURCES

- resource cards showing body shapes, balances, and action and movement combinations
- an appropriate selection of:
 - low apparatus, eg mats and benches
 - portable apparatus, eg a selection from planks, inclined platforms, padded platforms, A-frames or trestles, ladders, bars, balance beams, tables
 - fixed apparatus, eg climbing frames, ropes

EXPECTATIONS

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

most children will be able to:

perform actions, balances, body shapes and agilities with control; plan, perform and repeat longer sequences that include changes of speed and level, clear shapes and quality of movement; adapt their own movements to include a partner in a sequence; understand that strength and suppleness can be improved; lead a partner through short warm-up routines; recognise criteria that lead to improvement, eg *changing a level*; watch, describe and suggest possible improvements to others' performances; suggest improvements to their own performance

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

perform a range of basic actions and use them to put together a short sequence; remember and repeat short sequences with some changes in level, direction or speed; say why it is important to warm up; carry out warm-up exercises carefully; with help, describe similarities and differences in others' performances

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

perform longer, more complex sequences, including more difficult gymnastic agilities and imaginative combinations of actions; choose, practise and refine sequences on their own; say when movements are performed well; demonstrate exercises that strengthen major muscle groups; say which joint or joints are affected by specific stretches; suggest a number of ways that a sequence could be improved, and choose one of these as a focus for improvement; take the lead when working in a small group; adapt actions to include group members

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 develop the range of actions, body shapes and balances they include in a performance to perform skills and actions more accurately and consistently | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help the children to practise agilities and actions that they can include in their sequence. Help them to perform different combinations of these. Teach them how to perform these combinations with a change of speed, level or direction. Teach the children to perform actions, body shapes and balances at the same time as a partner. Teach them to use the same basic shape and vary it slightly. Help the children to practise and refine their performance. Encourage them to work on tension, extension and transfer of weight in all their work. Help them to perform difficult combinations of movements, shapes and balances with control, accuracy and consistency. |
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- perform a range of actions and agilities with consistency, fluency and clarity of movement
- make similar or contrasting shapes on the floor and apparatus, working with a partner
- combine actions and maintain the quality of performance when performing at the same time as a partner

SELECTING AND APPLYING SKILLS, TACTICS AND COMPOSITIONAL IDEAS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to create gymnastic sequences that meet a theme or set of conditions to use compositional devices when creating their sequences, such as changes in speed, level and direction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the children to devise, perform and repeat sequences that include travel, body shapes and balances. Help them to change their sequences, <i>eg to repeat their original sequence along a different pathway, or to reverse the order of elements from the original sequence.</i> Teach the children to make up, perform and repeat sequences that include changes of dynamics, <i>eg changes of level, speed or direction.</i> Teach the children to work with a partner, to organise their space and apparatus, and to time the start and finish of their sequences. Teach them to adapt sequences to include apparatus and/or to suit a partner or a small group. Talk to the children about how they set and meet challenges by thinking about different combinations of movement, shape and balance. |
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- combine actions to make sequences with changes of speed, level and direction, and clarity of shape
- gradually increase the length of sequences
- work with a partner to make up a short sequence using the floor, mats and apparatus, showing consistency, fluency and clarity of movement

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF FITNESS AND HEALTH

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to describe how the body reacts during different types of activity, and how this affects the way they perform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the children what they think 'fitness' means. Ask them what elements of fitness they think are particularly important in gymnastics. Ask the children to explain how stretching exercises can increase the range of movement in a joint or a combination of joints, and how this affects performance. Help them to make up, practise and remember stretching exercises that increase the range of movement safely. Teach the children how strength exercises can improve control and posture in gymnastics. Listen to the children's views on which parts of the body need to be strong or supple when performing particular agilities or balances. |
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- understand that strength and suppleness are key features of gymnastic performance
- devise routines of stretching exercises that prepare them for their gymnastic work

EVALUATING AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to describe their own and others' work, making simple judgements about the quality of performances and suggesting ways they could be improved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the children which parts of the task they have completed, and which parts they still need to make up or practise. Help the children to compare and contrast similar performances. Help them to suggest ways to improve the quality of a sequence. Teach them to use appropriate language to assess the quality of movement, <i>eg extension, body tension, flow, timing, unison.</i> Talk to them about how they help each other to improve performance. Encourage them to value and support other people's ideas. |
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- make simple assessments of performance based on a criterion given by the teacher
- use these assessments to modify and refine their sequences and others' work
- offer constructive ideas when working with a partner, including ideas on balances, inversion and transfer of weight

- 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 practise their work, and to show and teach it to different partners. When working in pairs and small groups, the children should have an opportunity to work with different partners.
- Give the children time to finish and refine a sequence before moving them on to a new piece of apparatus or sequence.
- Give the children the opportunity to record their sequence to help them remember it and share their ideas with others. They could use a graphics package to record different apparatus layouts and to map sequence pathways.
- The children could use a digital video camera to record sequences and combinations of actions. This would help them to evaluate the quality of movements and links. They could also put together a class database of digital camera photos or ordinary photos scanned on to a CD-ROM, which they could then use to compare and contrast different movements and sequences.
- Make sure the children have an opportunity to see good-quality performances and actions by watching demonstrations and videos, and by looking at photographs, pictures and resource cards.
- Give the children specific feedback on their ideas, compositions and how to improve the quality of their movement.

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 and working?
- Have they all warmed up and cooled down properly?
- Do they all know how to lift and move apparatus safely?

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- made a sequence of contrasting actions, *eg two jumps and two balances*
- improved their work by demonstrating extension and body tension, controlled landings, and clear changes of speed and flow in sequence work
- adapted their work to the needs of a partner

CORE TASKS

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

Task 1

Create a sequence using floor and mats that has up to six elements, *eg four twisted shapes and two ways of turning while travelling*. Teach your sequence to a partner, and then perform it so that both of you start, perform and finish at the same time.

Task 2

Using floor and apparatus, work with a partner to create and perform a sequence that involves both of you moving together from a starting point, and then moving apart to finish. The sequence should include at least four elements, and each of you should follow an L-shaped pathway.

Adaptations and variations on the tasks

Ask the children to:

- make their sequences longer or shorter, *eg include more balances, body shapes, ways of travelling*
- make up another sequence using the same rules, *eg change the order of shapes and ways of travelling*
- perform the sequence with a change in dynamics, or include a second dynamic, *eg perform the sequence with changes of level and speed, or changes of speed and direction*
- find a way to perform the same sequence using different apparatus, or a combination of floor and apparatus
- work in groups of three or four
- use canon instead of matching, or work with another pair and find ways to change partners during the sequence
- perform the sequence with a different emphasis, *eg stretched shapes and movements that involve curling actions*

EXTENSION AND ENRICHMENT

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

- go to local gymnastic displays (they could watch other classes perform in lessons or assemblies)
- join extracurricular gymnastic activity clubs
- follow balance, shape and movement phrase trails at playtime (these could be set up in the playground)
- get in touch with local gymnastic clubs
- watch national and international gymnastic events on television, or find out about them in books or on CD-ROM
- write down or describe their sequences to their parents or guardians
- perform some of their floor sequences at home

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

This unit could be linked to:

- mathematics – investigating shape and space
- PSHE – valuing self and others, understanding that other people's feelings are important

