

Dance activities – unit 2

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children focus on creating and performing short dances that communicate different moods, feelings and ideas. Their work is inspired by a range of subjects, including some based on different times and cultures.

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 shape and develop spatial awareness. They will build on their understanding of how dynamic and rhythmic qualities can be used to express moods, ideas and feelings. They will also develop their ability to work with a partner and in a small group.

In other year 2 units children explore themes such as pathways, patterns and formations.

VOCABULARY

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

- words to describe body actions and body parts
- stimulus (the starting point for dance)
- words to describe levels, *eg high, medium, low*
- words to describe directions
- words to describe pathways, *eg curved, zigzag*
- words to describe moods, ideas and feelings, *eg happy, angry, calm, excited, sad, lonely*
- tired, hot, sweaty, heart rate
- warm up, cool down

RESOURCES

- a cassette or CD player
- video camera and playback equipment
- percussion instruments
- drum-kits
- an electronic keyboard
- a variety of stimuli, *eg words, stories, poems, pictures, objects, videos, music*

EXPECTATIONS

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

<i>most children will be able to:</i>	perform body actions with control and coordination; choose movements with different dynamic qualities to make a dance phrase that expresses an idea, mood or feeling; link actions; remember and repeat dance phrases; perform short dances, showing an understanding of expressive qualities; describe the mood, feelings and expressive qualities of dance; describe how dancing affects their body; know why it is important to be active; suggest ways they could improve their work
<i>some children will not have made so much progress. They will be able to:</i>	perform basic body actions; respond to stimuli and musical accompaniment when given extra time; make a simple dance phrase; begin to explore dynamic and expressive qualities; perform short dances, showing some understanding of expressive qualities; with help, describe their work; begin to work with a partner; show some understanding of why they need to warm up; with help, focus on specific actions when they watch others
<i>some children will have progressed further. They will be able to:</i>	create, improve and perform more complex dance phrases; perform short dances, linking actions fluently and with control; use dynamic and expressive qualities clearly in their dance; use some simple dance vocabulary to describe and interpret dance; know how particular activities can help them to be healthy

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

ACQUIRING AND DEVELOPING SKILLS

- to explore, remember, repeat and link a range of actions with coordination, control, and an awareness of the expressive qualities of the dance
- Ask the children to talk about the moods, ideas and feelings inspired by different stimuli. Use these stimuli as the starting point for short dance frameworks focusing on moods, ideas and feelings.
- Ask the children how different stimuli make them feel, *eg hot weather might make them feel sunny, hot, happy and lazy, while foggy weather might make them feel scared and lost*. Ask the children to show and tell you what type of body actions they would use to explore these feelings. Encourage them to vary the speed, strength, energy and tension of their movements, and to use different levels and directions. They could also try working with a partner.

- talk about different stimuli as the starting point for creating dance phrases and short dances
- explore actions in response to stimuli
- explore ideas, moods and feelings by improvising, and by experimenting with actions, dynamics, directions, levels and a growing range of possible movements

SELECTING AND APPLYING SKILLS, TACTICS AND COMPOSITIONAL IDEAS

- to compose and perform dance phrases and short dances that express and communicate moods, ideas and feelings, choosing and varying simple compositional ideas
- Ask the children to perform dance phrases with a clear beginning, middle and end. Help them to practise, link and repeat movements and phrases with control, coordination and an awareness of space. Teach them to use different dynamic and spatial qualities, *eg travelling slowly up and down, turning quickly and lightly around the space, jumping in different directions with a partner*. Help them to link movements and dance phrases fluently.
- Ask the children to describe how they feel when they see crashing waves or a wild storm. Help them to create and structure simple dance phrases based on these stimuli. Teach them to use actions with different directions, levels, speed and tension to interpret the mood and idea of the dance.
- Ask the children to describe how they feel when listening to different music, *eg soft, calm classical music; loud, electronic beats; African drumming*. Help them to make dance phrases that reflect the rhythmic and dynamic qualities of the music.

- choose and link actions to make short dance phrases that express an idea, mood or feeling, and reflect rhythmic qualities
- remember and repeat a short dance phrase, showing greater control, coordination and spatial awareness
- perform dance phrases and short dances using rhythmic and dynamic qualities to express moods, ideas and feelings
- show some sensitivity to the accompaniment

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF FITNESS AND HEALTH

- to recognise and describe how different dance activities make them feel
- to understand the importance of warming up and cooling down
- Talk to the children about why dance is a healthy activity.
- Ask the children to describe how their breathing, body temperature and heart rate change when they are moving quickly and standing still. Help them to understand the link between these changes when they are dancing at different speeds, rhythms and for different lengths of time.
- Teach the children to use appropriate stretching exercises to warm up and cool down.

- know how their bodies feel after dance activities
- know that they need to warm up and cool down for dance

EVALUATING AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

- to watch and describe dance phrases and dances, and use what they learn to improve their own work
- Ask the children to describe actions, simple dynamic qualities and the way space is used in the dances they watch. Encourage them to use a range of appropriate language to describe how moods, ideas and feelings are expressed through different types of action and movement.
- Talk to the children about how different dances make them feel and about what they like and dislike.

- describe dance phrases and expressive qualities
- say what they like and dislike, giving reasons
- show an understanding of mood and describe how a dance makes them feel

- 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 or will do.
- Make sure the children have an opportunity to watch and talk about examples of professional dance, *eg 'L'enfant et les Sortilèges' (Nederlands Dans Theatre), 'The Clog Dance' and 'The Maypole Dance' from 'La Fille Mal Gardée' (The Royal Ballet Company)*.
- 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 rhythmic patterns for the children to respond to. This means that work can be followed up and repeated over several lessons, so children become familiar with patterns.
- Digital cameras can be used to record key shapes that children need to remember and repeat in their dances. The children could put together a database of visual images to act as stimuli for dance ideas and a class discussion on thoughts and feelings, *eg slumped shapes, spider moving on a web, drooping shapes*.
- Talking about dances would allow a focus on many of the objectives identified in year 1 of the framework for planning in *Teaching speaking and listening in key stages 1 and 2 (QCA/99/391)*.

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?

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- used space safely
- explored a range of body actions using the whole body and individual parts of the body
- created and copied a short movement phrase
- explored a range of dynamic qualities, eg *heavy, light, strong, fast*
- had some experience of watching dance and describing body actions

CORE TASK

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

Task 1

Create and perform short dances, using rhythm and expressive and dynamic qualities to show different moods, ideas and feelings. You could use stimuli such as *Ananse and the Sky God*, with:

- sad children – walking and stopping, droopy, slow, slumped shapes
- angry Sky God – angry, stamping, giant-like steps; strong, sudden movements
- spider's web and climbing – weaving, zigzag curving, travelling patterns, climbing actions on the spot
- happy motif – skipping, hopping, running, shaking

Adaptations and variations on the task

To make the task easier:

- use ideas the children are familiar with
- make the dance 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 dance 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 stimuli or dance ideas could include the sea, festivals, the seasons, and weather.

EXTENSION AND ENRICHMENT

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

- use expressive movement ideas when taking part in gymnastic competitions, drama clubs or ice-skating activities
- join a school dance club
- copy and create social dances in the home and community, eg at *religious festivals, family celebrations, school discos, fashion shows*
- watch dance on television and video, eg *musicals and popular dance*
- see dance at the theatre, eg *pantomimes and ballets*, and enjoy being part of an audience

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

This unit could be linked to:

- art and design – looking at how colour expresses moods and feelings
- poetry and stories – extending descriptive and expressive vocabulary
- English – describing dances and movements would allow children to use synonyms and alternative vocals to convey different shades of meaning
- mathematics – developing counting and patterning skills
- music – understanding world music, celebrations and religious festivals

