

Dance activities – unit 5

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children learn different styles of dance and focus on dancing with other people. They create, perform and watch dances in a range of styles, working with partners and groups.

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 'Dance activities – unit 6', in which children will use different visual images as a starting point for dance. They will be encouraged to become more adventurous when improvising and exploring ideas, developing their knowledge of how props, costume, design and music enrich dance.

In other physical education units in year 5, children concentrate on designing and creating complex group sequences using music (gymnastics) and exploring pattern and space (games). Other year 5 units focus on visual art and design, and on personal and social issues, eg *destruction of the rainforests, refugees, pollution*.

VOCABULARY

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

- dance style, technique
- formation, pattern, gesture, rhythm
- language specific to particular dance styles, eg *pavane, haka*
- motif, variation

RESOURCES

- a cassette or CD player
- percussion instruments
- a video camera
- a variety of stimuli, eg *historical books, artefacts and costumes, pictures or videos of different dance styles*

EXPECTATIONS

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

most children will be able to:

compose motifs and plan dances creatively and collaboratively in groups; adapt and refine the way they use weight, space and rhythm in their dances to express themselves in the style of dance they use; perform different styles of dance clearly and fluently; organise their own warm-up and cool-down exercises; show an understanding of safe exercising; recognise and comment on dances, showing an understanding of style; suggest ways to improve their own and other people's work

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

create and perform simple dances that attempt to focus on the style of the dance; take part in group dances; take part in discussions about the structure of the dance or final performance; with help, choose exercises to warm up and cool down; show some understanding of how to exercise safely in dance; use simple words to talk about their own and other people's work

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

plan and perform dances confidently; use their understanding of composition to create dance phrases for themselves and others in their group; use their knowledge of dance to adapt their skills to meet the demands of a range of dance styles; show expression in their dances and sensitivity to music; organise their own warm up and cool down exercises; show that they understand why warming up is important for a good performance; identify the form and structure of a dance; make imaginative suggestions on how to improve their own and other people's work

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

ACQUIRING AND DEVELOPING SKILLS

- to explore and improvise ideas for dances in different styles, working on their own, with a partner and in a group
- Show the children pictures, videos, music, art objects and dress or costume from the time and place of the chosen dance style. Ask them to respond to the stimuli, and to explore ideas and improvise movements imaginatively.
- Ask the children to explore actions, gestures, body shapes, rhythms and travelling patterns that suit the style, eg *Tudor – straight back, lifted head, small steps, arms held to body, pathways and stepping patterns; Flamenco – use of arms, hands, heels, clapping and stamping rhythms, flow of energy.*
- Help the children to create motifs and develop phrases in the style, eg *Tudor – a taught step pattern working with a partner, including meeting, parting, travelling side by side, turning round each other, moving in a figure of eight; Flamenco – clapping rhythms with hands, travelling pattern moving sideways, stamping feet, sweeping turns, arms arching overhead.* Encourage the children to develop their dance phrases by varying shape, group size, directions and levels.

- explore, improvise and choose appropriate material to create new motifs in a chosen dance style
- perform specific skills and movement patterns for different dance styles with accuracy

- 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 and develop their movements and ideas. They should also have opportunities to talk about, explore and play with dance and movement ideas.
- Make sure the children have an opportunity to watch and talk about examples of professional dance, eg *'Making of Maps' (Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company), 'Coming Home' (Adzido Dance Company), 'Tennis Dance from Late Flowering Lust' (Adventures in Motion Pictures), 'Stamp Out Loud' (Stomp), 'Sportsbank' (BBC Schools Publications).*
- Give children opportunities to watch and work with different partners and groups.
- Give the children specific guidance on what to do and how to do it, as well as general feedback and praise. Make sure you give them information that they can use to improve the quality of their performance.
- The children could put together a database of visual images, sounds and actions that they could link to music. They could use a tape recorder to record different sounds then store, repeat and reorganise these to accompany their dance phrases. They could also use a video camera to record, compare and contrast their own variations of motifs.
- Engaging with the specialist vocabulary of dance would reinforce children's investigations of technical language when carrying out literacy work.

SELECTING AND APPLYING SKILLS, TACTICS AND COMPOSITIONAL IDEAS

- to compose dances by using, adapting and developing steps, formations and patterning from different dance styles
- to perform dances expressively, using a range of performance skills
- Show the children how to create and develop dance phrases on their own, with a partner and in small groups.
- Ask them to change, vary and develop actions, space, dynamics and relationships (how partners and groups position themselves), and to look at shape and patterning. Help them to copy and adapt different step patterns and gestures.
- Help the children to identify and make clear the dynamics of the movement, eg *the speed and weight, and the spatial qualities of the movement, the way they fill space around them with their bodies, that are specific to the dance style.*
- Teach the children to perform with clear starting and finishing positions. Encourage them to convey the mood and feeling of the dance. Help them to be sensitive to the musical accompaniment and to keep in time with it when performing.

- compose, develop and adapt motifs to make dance phrases and use these in longer dances

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF FITNESS AND HEALTH

- to organise their own warm-up and cool-down activities to suit the dance
- to show an understanding of why it is important to warm up and cool down
- Ask the children to make up their own warm-up and cool-down sequences. Make sure that they know how to put together a safe series of exercises.
- Teach the children a range of ideas that help them to prepare for, and recover from, their dancing. Help them to understand that practising technique can help them warm up and help with areas of fitness, eg *strength, body tone and flexibility.*

- warm up and cool down independently
- use exercises that stretch and tone their bodies and help them prepare for their dance

EVALUATING AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

- to describe, analyse, interpret and evaluate dances, showing an understanding of some aspects of style and context
- Ask the children to think about the effectiveness of the movements they have used, and the way they have ordered them, for a particular dance.
- Ask the children to think about the types of movement used for the dance and how the dance relates to its accompaniment. Teach them to describe different parts of the movements used.
- Talk to the children about the clothing or costume worn for the dance, and about its social and historical context. Ask them to think about how this might affect the way they perform the dance.
- Encourage the children to talk about what the dance means to them and how to develop their technique and composition.

- use appropriate dance terminology to identify and describe different styles in their own and others' dances
- talk about the relationship between the dance and its accompaniment
- suggest ways to develop their technique and composition

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:

- created and performed simple folk or social dances in groups
- used video and other visual images to create initial ideas and develop dance phrases
- gained experience of talking about dance, art and music
- gained experience of talking about how to improve their compositions and performances

CORE TASKS

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

Task 1

In groups, learn the patterns and structure for a set dance, *eg the pavane*, and then perform it to others.

Task 2

As a class, create and perform a dance with three sections. This might include:

- Tudor dance – a set dance focusing on performance style, patterning and timing
- patterns – using fabric and garden designs to create small group dances that develop step patterns, gestures and pathways
- the masque ball – a processional section with different leaders and characters, *eg courtiers, jesters*, which develops into a whole-class dance combining different formations, rhythms and patterns

Working with your teacher, decide how individuals and groups will take on roles and sections of the dance. Try taking on your partner's role in the dance. Try being the choreographer for a small section of the dance.

Adaptations and variations on the tasks

To make the task easier:

- use ideas the children are familiar with
- make the dance phrases shorter and keep actions simple
- use simple accompaniment
- ask the children to work on their own or in pairs
- 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 dance ideas could include Zorba line dance; the slave trade; the Wild West (cowhands, Native Americans); American square dancing or line dancing; tribal dances, *eg haka, Aboriginal stamping dances*; terraces and turfs (sporting customs).

Alternatively, the children could choose their own dance stimulus or idea.

EXTENSION AND ENRICHMENT

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

- practise dance after school, at home and in social or community clubs and gatherings
- help to organise a 70s evening, including costumes and dances
- visit local theatres, to develop their understanding of performance as a whole
- visit museums, art galleries, libraries and local cultural events
- watch dance performances by their peers or community groups in school

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

This unit could be linked to:

- drama – using narrative and performance skills
- history – exploring the historical origins of dance
- ICT – designing stage sets
- music – learning about different styles of world music
- PSHE – developing awareness of relaxation and stress management through dance
- spiritual, moral, social and cultural work – developing understanding of beliefs, values and attitudes

