

Gymnastic activities – unit 6

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children use their knowledge of compositional principles, *eg how to use variations in speed, level and direction, how to combine and link actions, how to relate to partners and apparatus*, to develop sequences that show an awareness of their audience.

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 future gymnastic units, in which children will plan and perform a sequence with a partner. They will perform to music, drawing on work already done in dance. They will choose their own apparatus and design a simple layout. They will work in a group of four, concentrating on timing and relationships. They will learn and develop agilities for which they may need physical support at first. They will watch others perform, evaluate how well sequences have been put together, and suggest ways of improving a performance. The year 6 dance activities also focus on using principles of composition, developing an awareness of audience, and working in groups towards a complex task.

VOCABULARY

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

- counterbalance
- counter-tension
- tension
- obstacle
- straddle over
- aesthetic
- judgement

RESOURCES

- resource cards and material from national governing bodies showing specific agilities and sequences
- an appropriate selection of:
 - low apparatus, *eg mats*
 - intermediate apparatus, *eg benches, planks, vaulting box tops, inclined platforms, padded platforms*
 - portable high apparatus, *eg vaulting boxes, bar boxes, high tables*
 - fixed high apparatus, *eg ropes, rope ladders, climbing frames*

EXPECTATIONS

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

most children will be able to:

make up longer, more complex sequences, including changes of direction, level and speed; develop their own solutions to a task by choosing and applying a range of compositional principles; combine and perform gymnastic actions, shapes and balances; show clarity, fluency, accuracy and consistency in their movements; in small groups, prepare a sequence to be performed to an audience; understand the importance of warming up and cooling down; say, in simple terms, why activity is good for their health, fitness and wellbeing; show an awareness of factors influencing the quality of a performance and suggest aspects that need improving

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

make up, practise and refine sequences with a partner when preparing for performance; choose actions, shapes and balances from memory; use their knowledge of composition to make up a sequence, including changes of direction or level; practise and refine actions, shapes and balances on their own; refine sequences, with guidance; talk confidently about why it is important to warm up; prepare for exercise on their own; make simple judgements about their own and others' work

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

make up their own sequences; arrange their own apparatus safely to suit the needs of a task; organise small groups independently; include a wide range of actions, shapes and balances in their performance, some of which are original; lead class warm-up activities; explain, using appropriate language, how activity improves health, fitness and wellbeing; use their own criteria to judge performance; suggest different ideas that will lead to individuals improving their performance in small group sequences

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

ACQUIRING AND DEVELOPING SKILLS

- to combine and perform gymnastic actions, shapes and balances more fluently and effectively across the activity areas
- to help the children to develop more variety in the way they perform skills and actions, eg *counterbalance, use their partner as the base for a balance, different rotations*. Ask them to extend the range of actions, shapes and balances they use for a particular gymnastics theme, eg *twisting and turning*. Show them how to reverse the direction of a twisting or turning action while maintaining fluency and clarity. Ask them to move fluently into and out of balances, and then to use this movement as a transition from one place to another.
- to help the children to practise and refine their actions, shapes and balances, so that they become more fluent and controlled. Teach them how to adapt actions from floor to apparatus, and from apparatus to floor.
- to teach them how to vary the distance they travel or the length of time they spend in a balance or shape.

- perform fluently and with control, even when performing difficult combinations
- work well with a partner or a small group to practise and refine their work

SELECTING AND APPLYING SKILLS, TACTICS AND COMPOSITIONAL IDEAS

- to develop their own gymnastic sequences by understanding, choosing and applying a range of compositional principles
- to ask the children to make up a sequence and to adapt it to different apparatus layouts. Help them to use combinations of dynamics, eg *pathways*, to use the space available effectively.
- to teach the children to make up their own rules for longer, more complex sequences. Teach them to plan a sequence, and to adapt it to a limited number of mats and other apparatus to complete the task. Teach them to work as a group and share out roles fairly.
- to help the children to investigate how different ways of working with a partner or a small group, eg *starting together, starting apart, moving apart and then together matching actions, moving in opposite directions on a diagonal*, help to change the way their sequence is seen.
- to teach the children to use compositional devices, eg *contrasts and variations in shape, speed, level, timing and actions*, when developing their own sequences.

- make up longer sequences and perform them with fluency and clarity of movement
- vary direction, levels and pathways, to improve the look of a sequence
- use planned variations and contrasts in actions and speed in their sequences

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF FITNESS AND HEALTH

- to understand why warming-up and cooling-down are important
- to understand why exercise is good for health, fitness and wellbeing, and how to become healthier themselves
- to carry out warm ups safely and effectively
- to teach the children how gymnastic activity promotes strength, power and suppleness. Help them to identify how this can help their own health and fitness.
- to teach the children the importance of warming up, eg *it prepares the body for vigorous exercise*, and the value of cooling down, eg *it settles the mind, settles the body, avoids muscle stiffness*. Talk to them about the value of exercise outside the school day. Teach them how to devise an effective warm up for gymnastic activity, that warms the muscles and mobilises the joints.
- to ask the children to set out apparatus and to carry out preliminary checks, eg *making sure that equipment is stable, fittings are secure, equipment is spaced appropriately for the tasks*. Help them to judge the safety of an apparatus layout.

- understand what it is important to include in a warm up for gymnastic activity
- recognise that a cool down is important
- understand how gymnastic activity helps their overall health
- know how to improve their own health and fitness

EVALUATING AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

- to evaluate their own and others' work
- to suggest ways of making improvements
- to ask the children to watch sequences and judge the quality of the performance against technical and compositional criteria.
- to teach the children to give feedback effectively, eg *to say something that's true, comment on the well-performed part of the sequence, talk about something that needs improving, then watch again*.
- to talk to the children about their observations and teach them how to choose a particular aspect to practise. Listen to what they say when they help each other to improve. Help them to use the terminology they need.

- watch performances and use criteria to make judgements and suggest improvements
- explain how a sequence is formed, using appropriate terminology to describe technique and composition when evaluating both their own and others' performances

- 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. The children could use a pulse monitor to check their heart rates as they warm up, then identify which activities are gentle and which are vigorous.
- Give the children enough time to practise their work, and to show and teach it to different partners. When working in pairs or small groups, the children should have an opportunity to work with different partners, taking account of friendships and size to make sure they are secure and safe.
- Give the children time to finish and refine a sequence before moving them on to a new piece of apparatus or a new sequence.
- The children could use a digital video camera or a stills camera to record sequences and combinations of actions. This would help them to evaluate the quality of movements and links by analysing what different body parts are doing during a performance. They could also use their recordings to compare and contrast performances.
- They could use a graphics package to record different apparatus layouts and to map sequence pathways. This can help them to remember and share ideas with others.
- Make sure the children have an opportunity to see good-quality performances and actions by watching demonstrations and videos, and 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?
- Are the children grouped appropriately by size and ability to ensure safety and to help their learning?
- Do they all know how to lift and move apparatus safely?

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- performed a sequence of contrasting actions for an audience
- experienced matching and mirroring with a partner
- learned that ways of linking actions are as important as the actions themselves
- set out apparatus safely and efficiently

CORE TASKS

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

Task 1

Using what you know about composing a sequence, create and perform a sequence on floor and apparatus for an audience. Your sequence should include at least eight to 10 elements, *eg start on the floor, move onto apparatus, finish on the floor*. It must also include twisting and turning, flight, changes of direction and speed, and contrasting shapes and balances.

Task 2

Adapt the sequence you created in Task 1 so that it can be performed in a small group of three or four, using the floor and apparatus so that each person starts and finishes in a different place.

Adaptations and variations on the tasks

Ask the children to:

- make the 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 larger or smaller groups, and include canon, matching and synchronised movement
- 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 activities clubs
- 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:

- science – investigating balanced and unbalanced forces and motions
- design and technology – looking at how structures can fail when loaded, investigating techniques for reinforcing and strengthening structures
- PSHE – making healthy choices about lifestyle
- art and design – watching the position and movement of the body, using shape and space
- religious education – exploring values and attitudes, *eg developing a positive attitude to life, understanding the importance of having a set of values*

