

The Nutcracker

The Nutcracker Lesson Plan introduces students to the concept of emotionally and physically telling a story through dance and pantomime. It will help students to understand that in ballet the dancer is trained to act out the story/character with movement instead of words.

Standards:

National Art Education Standards The National Standards For Arts Education

Subject	Area	Content Standard	Achievement Standard
Dance Music	Grade K-4, Dance Standard 3	Understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning	Students observe and discuss how dance is different from other forms of human movement (such as sports, everyday gestures)
	Grade K-4, Dance Standard 5:	Demonstrating and understanding dance in various cultures and historical periods.	Students accurately answer questions about dance in a particular culture and time period
	Grade K-4, Music Standard 7:	Evaluating music and music performances	Students devise criteria for evaluating performances and compositions
Visual Arts	Grade K-4, Visual Arts Standard 4	Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures	<p>Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures</p> <p>Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places</p> <p>Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art</p>

New York State Learning Standards for the Arts

Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

- Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.

- Dance: Students will know how to access dance and dance related material from libraries, resource centers, museums, studios, and performance spaces. Students will know various career possibilities in dance and creational opportunities to dance. Students will attend dance events and participate as appropriate within each setting.
 - ♣ Students:
 - Demonstrate knowledge of audience/performer responsibilities and relationships in dance (c)
 - Demonstrate knowledge of differences in performance venue and the events presented in each (d).

Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

- Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought
 - Dance: Students will express through written and oral language their understanding, interpretation, and evaluations of dances they see, do, and read about. Students will acquire the critical vocabulary to talk and write about a variety of dance forms.
 - ♣ Students express to others their understanding of specific dance performances, using appropriate language to describe what they have seen and heard (b).

Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts

- Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.
 - Dance: Students will know dances from many cultures and times and recognize their relationship to various cultural, social, and historic contexts. Students will recognize that dance is performed in many different cultural settings and serves many functions in diverse societies.

Learning Objectives: Students will:

- be introduced to the story of *The Nutcracker* originally by E. T. A. Hoffman,

- understand how a story may be told through dance, and
- Learn about ballet as a means of expression and storytelling.
- Understand how many elements are combined to create a live performance onstage.
- Know and demonstrate appropriate audience behavior at a live ballet performance.

Teaching Approach: Thematic; Project-Based Learning; and Arts Integration

Teaching Methods: Direct Instruction; Discussion; Experiential Learning, and Reflection.

Preparation:

Explain the plot of *The Nutcracker*.

Explain to students that the story of The Nutcracker has often been told without words, through a type of dance called ballet. Also, explain that

Explain that ballet is one of many types of dancing. Dancers train for years to learn ballet. Ballerinas dance on their toes in special shoes, which are called “Pointe shoes;” ballet dancers wear tights and leotards to show the lines of their bodies and to move with a wide range of flexibility; in a professional theatre the audience shows its appreciation by clapping (applauding). Dancers can dance alone or together.

Explain Proper Audience Participation Rules

- ♣ Sit quietly, listen and watch the action onstage.
- ♣ Do not laugh at the dancers’ costumes, they are part of the story
- ♣ Do not clap the beat of the music or make noises that would distract others.
- ♣ Sit still please, do not stand up or dance, as you are a member of the audience!
- ♣ Applaud to show your appreciation, but do not whistle, shouter stomp.
- ♣ Hold your applause until the end of a section of the ballet.
- ♣ Applaud individual dancers or groups as they enter or exit the stage
- ♣ Applaud when dancers face the audience and take a bow
- ♣ Kindly do not kick the chair of the person sitting in front of you

Introduce vocabulary.

VOCABULARY:

Ballerina – female dancer;
Danseur – male dancer;
Tu-tu – ballerina’s dress;
Pirouette – French word for turn

Pre-Assessment

Label

1. Nutcracker
2. Mouse King
3. Clara
4. Prince
5. Godfather

Name _____

Post -Assessment

Label

1. Nutcracker
2. Mouse King
3. Clara
4. Prince
5. Godfather

Name _____	
Pre-Assessment	
Name _____ Room _____	
Match Picture with Vocabulary Word	
	Ballet shoes
	Tutu
	Danseur and Ballerina
	Ballerina
Post -Assessment	
Name _____ Room _____	
Match Picture with Vocabulary Word	
	Ballet shoes
	Tutu
	Danseur and Ballerina
	Ballerina

Pre-Assessment

Name _____ Grade _____

Audience Etiquette

	True	False
Audience members should whistle and stomp to show their appreciation.		
Audience members who arrive late should enter as quietly as possible.		
Audience members should not stand up or dance during the performance.		
Audience members are allowed to answer cell phones during performances.		
Audience members can applaud when dancers face the audience and take a bow		

Audience members should not laugh at the dancers' costumes because the costumes are part of the story		
Audience members can stand up or walk around during a ballet performance.		
Audience members should not kick the seat in front of them.		
Audience members can eat snacks during performances.		
Audience members should hold your applause until the end of a section of the ballet.		
Audience members should be as quiet as possible during a performance.		
Audience members are allowed to take pictures during a performance.		
Audience members can rattle their programs.		
Audience members should leave their programs on their seats instead of taking them with them when they leave.		
Audience members can applaud individual dancers or groups as they enter or exit the stage		
Audience members should not go up on the stage after the performance unless they are invited.		
Audience members should go up the center aisle to take pictures or use video cameras.		
Audience members should stand up and wait their turn when it is time to leave the theater.		
Audience members should call out their friends' names if they see performers they know on stage.		
Audience members can clap to the beat of the music during a ballet.		

Post-Assessment

Name _____ Grade _____

Audience Etiquette

	True	False
Audience members should whistle and stomp to show their appreciation.		
Audience members who arrive late should enter as quietly as possible.		

Audience members should not stand up or dance during the performance.		
Audience members are allowed to answer cell phones during performances.		
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