

Activity Plan

<i>Title</i>	Discovering Russian Folk Dance
<i>Subject</i>	Dance: Connecting
<i>Author</i>	ArtsEdge: Lillian Hasko <i>Original Writer</i>
<i>Grade level</i>	Grades 6-8
<i>Time duration</i>	60-120 mins
<i>Overview</i>	Students will learn the Russian folk dance "Troika." Then, they will work in groups of three (the traditional grouping used in the "Troika") to research Russian culture and history. After sharing their research findings during an oral presentation, students will create their own rendition of a Russian folk dance using the same organizational pattern and music.
<i>Objective</i>	Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perform the Russian folk dance "Troika" to music• Work in small groups to research and share information on an aspect of Russia or Russian culture• Collaborate with others in the class in creating movements that represent their findings about Russia• Create, in a group of three, a 32-count movement sequence that visually communicates an aspect of life in Russia
<i>Materials</i>	Materials Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Printable• Instructions For Troika• Russian Folk Oral Rubric• Russian Folk Dance Rubric Required Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DVD Player• Television

- VCR

ENGAGE

1. Introduce the class to the genre of folk dancing. Folk dance is a form of dance performed by the people of a particular country or ethnic heritage. Explain that even though they are often performed for an audience, folk dances were originally intended for community participation. Tell students that the steps completed in folk dances often represent aspects of life in the country from which the dance originates. For example, in the Russian folk dance “Troika,” three dancers represent horses pulling a type of sleigh called a troika in Russian.

2. Give students an outline of the lesson. Tell students that they will learn to dance "Troika." They will then research one aspect of Russia or Russian life and share it with the class. Next, in groups of three, they will create movements that communicate those ideas about Russia. Finally, as a class and in groups of three, they will cooperatively create a movement sequence representing another aspect of Russia.

BUILD KNOWLEDGE

1. Teach and have the class execute the "Troika" dance while listening to music. (See the [Instructions for Troika](#) handout for dance steps. See the Sources section below for music suggestions.) Students should be in groups of three and should form a group circle, with one group of three behind another in a counterclockwise circle. The dance has three sections: 16 counts, 16 counts, and 32 counts.

2. Review a list of topics about Russian history and culture with students. You can write this on the whiteboard or overhead. The list may include the following: land and climate, people, way of life, recreation, etc. You may also wish to include other areas suggested by students.

3. Each group of three should select one of the topics on the list to research. Groups must research their selected topic and be prepared to share at least three pieces of information about it. Each student in the group must contribute at least one unique piece of information.

4. Have students use books and Internet resources for research. PBS's [The Face of Russia](#), in particular, offers comprehensive information on the history and culture of Russia.

5. Review with students the [Oral Presentation Rubric](#) that will be used to evaluate their presentations.

APPLY

Creating a New Folk Dance

1. Have each group present the information that they gathered on their Russian topic.
2. Have students brainstorm a list of ideas about Russia that could be communicated through movement. For each idea, have students think of a representative movement or gesture. To help students with movement possibilities, review and model the locomotor movements (walk, run, hop, jump, leap, skip, gallop, slide) and non-locomotor movements (bend, stretch, push, pull, swing, bounce, twist, shake).
3. Have the class select the three ideas they would most like to represent in their Russian folk dance. Remaining in groups of three, but working as an entire class, the students should improvise and suggest movements that communicate the first idea using a 16-count sequence.
4. Have students create a movement sequence for the first two ideas. The class should decide on the most appropriate movements for the first idea and then practice the 16-count sequence as a group, with music. This will be section one of the new folk dance. Revise the sequence as necessary and practice section one again. Use the same procedure to develop the second idea into section two of the dance. Practice sections one and two together.
5. Have students create a movement sequence for the third idea. Students should already be in groups of three. Tell them that each group will choreograph their own 32-count movement sequence that communicates the third idea in the list.
6. Give students time to choreograph and practice their 32-count sequence.
7. Have students perform their 32-count sequence for the other groups.

Conclusions

REFLECT

1. All students (including students in each performance group) and the teacher individually evaluate each presentation according to the [Dance Activity Rubric](#) located within the Resource Carousel.

Adaptations

Extend the Learning

Adapt or extend the lesson by substituting a folk dance from a different country.

Videotape the new Russian folk dance. Show the tape to other classes and see if they can answer questions such as:

- What country do you think this folk dance represents?
- What ideas do you think the students were trying to communicate in each of the three sections of the dance?

Links and Websites

- What did you learn about the Russian people from watching this new folk dance?

Teacher Background

PBS's [The Face of Russia](#) offers comprehensive information on the history and culture of Russia.

Read the Instructions for "Troika" Handout to assist you in learning (and subsequently teaching) the dance.

Prior Student Knowledge

Students may have some general knowledge of Russian culture, but this is not necessary.