

Activity Plan

<i>Title</i>	Ballet and Classical Music
<i>Subject</i>	Dance: Responding
<i>Author</i>	ArtsEdge: Amy Lotierzo <i>Original Writer</i> Jen Westmoreland Bouchard <i>Adaptation</i> Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ballanchine, George, and Mason, Francis. <i>101 Stories of the Great Ballets</i>. Reissue Edition. New York: Doubleday, 1975.• <i>The American Ballet Theatre's</i> interactive dictionary.
<i>Grade level</i>	Grades K-4
<i>Time duration</i>	60-120 mins
<i>Overview</i>	This lesson will introduce students to both conceptual and practical elements of classical ballet. They will learn basic ballet vocabulary through both verbal instruction and demonstration. Students will then associate the basic ballet vocabulary with the actual movement. This lesson will also include a discussion of classical music and the history of ballet.
<i>Objective</i>	Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be introduced to classical ballet vocabulary and movement.• Be introduced to classical music and learn the basic concept of rhythm.• Learn about the correlation between classical ballet and classical music.• Learn about the history of classical ballet.• Learn about dance as a means of physical fitness and entertainment, as well as a possible career option for classical ballet dancers and musicians.• Create a storyline for a ballet.• Choreograph the created story.• Choreograph the created story.

<p><i>Materials</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the production with the audience both pre- performance and post-performance.
<p><i>Activities and procedures</i></p>	<p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Vocabulary <p>ENGAGE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set up the classroom as described in the staging section. 2. As students walk into the classroom ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Does anyone know what kind of music this is?" • "Does anyone know what form of dance uses pointe shoes?" • "Has anyone ever seen a ballet performed?" • "How is ballet different from other forms of dance?" • "Where do you find dance/ballet in everyday life?" • "How does dance/ballet keep us physically fit or give us recreational enjoyment?" 3. Record student responses on the whiteboard. <p>BUILD</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain to students that most ballet vocabulary is in the French language. Show students where France is on a map and ask if they know anything about France or French culture. 2. Have students make flash cards for ballet vocabulary. Distribute index cards, and, as you write a few selected ballet terms on the board, ask students to copy the terms in order to make flash cards. Have them write the term on one side of the card and the explanation of the word/step on the other side. 3. Discuss ballet terminology. Distribute the Vocabulary handout, a copy is available to you within the Resource Carousel. After discussing the terminology, make a memory game out of it. Have the students sit on the floor with their index cards displayed in front of them, with the word/term face up. 4. Demonstrate each step/position and have the students try to pick out the card that has that vocabulary word written on it. Have them check the explanation on the back to see if they are correct. (If you are not able to demonstrate the steps, see if a professional dancer or advanced student from a local company/dance school will come in as a guest artist. This will also add authenticity and excitement to your presentation.) <p>APPLY</p>

1. Have students participate in a short ballet class. Ask students to stand, and start with a few stretching exercises. Then explain to students that all ballet classes are divided into two parts: barre exercises and center practice. Using the terminology that was explained above, teach a simple ballet class and give guided instructions to the students. Start by explaining appropriate posture and how to stand at the barre. Make sure the exercises given are appropriate for the age level of your students. The following movements can be taught:

Stretches

- Butterfly
- Hamstring stretch sitting on the floor
- Side stretches sitting on the floor
- Head and shoulders

Barre

- Pliés
- Port de bras
- Tendu
- Degagés
- Grand battement

Center

- Walking across the floor (stress good posture and stretched feet)
- Chassés
- Waltz
- Grand jetés

2. Play samples of classical ballet music and explain the connection between classical music and ballet. and count it out with the students aloud. Explain that ballet is usually choreographed in phrases of 8 beats. Explain the 1-2-3 count of a waltz, as it is a popular type of musical phrase in classical ballet. Ask students to describe how classical ballet music sounds and write the descriptive words on the board. Show students an example of a ballet on video.

3. Have students write a short story that includes characters such as a king and queen, royal courtiers, and town peasants. The story can be simple for smaller children and more elaborate for those in higher grades.

4. Have students create a small sequence of dance steps (16-32 counts) that reflects some aspect of the story. Students may work in groups to create their choreography, but each student should have his or her own original story.

5. Have each student or group give mini-performances for each other.

REFLECT

1. Have students discuss the performances. Review with the students the previous information on ballet, dance, and the performing arts (including history and vocabulary) and how they relate to society, healthy living, and entertainment. Ask students what kinds of careers are available in the dance field and discuss their answers.

2. Introduce students to ballet companies or schools. If there are any ballet companies or schools in your area, research them online and tell students about them. You may even want to print out pictures of these companies' performances (online) or share their performance season pamphlet(s) with the class.

Conclusions

Teacher Background

Prior to teaching this lesson, you should explore and familiarize yourself with some ballet terminology. A good resource is The American Ballet Theatre's interactive [dictionary](#).

Prior Student Knowledge

Students may have some general knowledge of ballet and classical music, but this is not necessary.

Physical Space

- Classroom
- Auditorium

Grouping

Large Group Instruction

Staging

To create an environment and mood for learning about ballet, have a small portable ballet barre in the center of the room with a pair of pointe shoes tied together, draping on either side of the barre. A ballet tutu and tiara should be hanging from the barre as well. Have some classical music playing at a low volume in the background, and tape pictures of famous ballet dancers on the blackboard.

Accessibility Notes

Students with physical disabilities may need modified movements.

ASSESS

Evaluation of the teaching/learning process should be based on the willingness of students to participate in all elements of the lesson, not necessarily the level of competency gained in the development of skills taught. Each student will learn movement skills at various levels, depending on their kinesthetic abilities. Thus, the focus of measuring

success should be on the interest and participation that the lesson generates among students

Adaptations

Extended Learning

- Have students refine their stories and movement and put on an informal performance for other students or parents and faculty.
- Invite a local ballet dancer or choreographer in to give a presentation. Have students prepare questions for this guest based on what they learned.

Links and Websites