

dance notes lesson plans

Key Stage 1

Dancing Around The World



Heather Spare

Dance

Key Stage 1

Lesson Plan for Key Stage 1 Dance

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Objectives:

- Explore the theme of different environments and cultures of the world.
- Use various stimuli, such as music and masks
- Learn different dance styles
- Appreciate the importance of warm ups, cool downs and stretching.
- Create dance material alone and with others, using different body parts, levels and dynamics.
- Learn control and co-ordination in travelling, jumping, turning, gesture and stillness.
- Use movement expressively to explore moods and feelings.
- Make simple judgements about dance.

The 4 Strands of the National curriculum:

- Acquiring and Developing Skills
- Selecting and Applying Skills, Tactics and Compositional Ideas
- Knowledge and Understanding of Fitness and Health
- Evaluating and Improving Performance

Unit Contents:

Week 1: 'Chinese Dragon Dance'

Week 2: 'Ancient Egypt'

Week 3: 'Mexican fiesta'

Week 4: 'The Antarctic and the Albatross'

Week 5: 'Native Americans'

Week 6: 'The Desert'

Tracks Used *(click on links below to audition)*

- ◀ ["Dragon Dance"](#) (Dance Notes Volume 2)
- ◀ ["Sand Dance"](#) (Dance Notes Volume 1)
- ◀ ["Cut To The Chase"](#) (Dance Notes Volume 4)
- ◀ ["Kingdom of the Fairies"](#) (Dance Notes Volume 4)
- ◀ ["Pow Wow"](#) (Dance Notes Volume 4)
- ◀ ["Desert Rain"](#) (Dance Notes Volume 4)

Week 1: Chinese Dragon Dance

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Warm up

Children skip or run around the space. Teacher claps hands every so often and asks the children to dance like a particular animal, e.g. horse, snake, fish, monkey and dragon.

Stretch

Stretch arms, sides of the body, and upper and lower legs.

Main

A Talk about the Chinese dragon (see resource notes).

B ◀ ["Dragon Dance"](#)

Children find a space and dance like the dragon. Teacher encourages children to explore the movement with helpful hints as appropriate, e.g. snake-like movement, five claws, lift, dip, push forwards, sweep the head, power, frightening but friendly, bold (etc.)

C Put the children in pairs to fix the dragon movement (choosing four of their favourite moves is a good way to start).

D The Chinese dragon has power over the weather. Ask each pair to be the weather (rain, thunder and lightning) and the dragon controlling it. The pupils can take it in turns to do each part.

E Movement discussion: half the class watches the other as pairs perform what they have come up with. (See resources for evaluation guidelines).

F Put the pairs into groups of four to make a group dragon. Get them to explore how it moves (see B for helpful hints).

Cool Down ◀ ["Dragon Dance"](#)

Children move around the space as if the dragon is in water until it gradually comes to rest. Stretch arms, sides of the body and upper and lower legs.

Week 2: Ancient Egypt

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Warm up ◀ ["Sand Dance"](#)

Boat on the Nile: The children stand quietly in the room with eyes closed. They imagine they are on a boat on the Nile. The boat rocks. How do they move? Get them to begin to travel with this motion. As they travel, add in paddles, which they use to propel the boat forward. They can hoist the sails and sail smoothly around the room.

Stretching

Stretch the arms, sides of the body and upper and lower legs.

Main ◀ ["Sand Dance"](#)

A The children stand in the space and respond as you call out the following actions:

Walk (*elbows bent, palms of hands facing up*)

Lunge (*forwards with heavy stone on backs for building pyramid*)

Lift (*water from the rivers/canals*)

Throw (*spears and lines for fishing*)

Pull (*Oxen pulling ploughs*)

B Put the children in groups of four to fix and practice these movements one after the other.

C Building pyramids and sphinx: The groups of four practise making the shape of a pyramid and then a sphinx. Next they should link the shapes by choosing a movement to get from one to another.

D Practice B and C

E Watch the groups and discuss the movement (See resources for evaluation guidelines).

Cool Down ◀ ["Track"](#)

Walk around the room like an Egyptian with elbows bent, palms of hands facing up. Come to a stop and stretch arms, sides of body and upper and lower legs.

Week 3: Mexican fiesta

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Warm up ◀ ["Cut To The Chase"](#)

Follow my leader: choose big happy movements as if you are at a party. Try to make the movements different for each person.

Don't let the children move in a circle. Get them to use all of the space as if they are one big snake.

Stretching

Stretch arms, sides of the body and upper and lower legs.

Main ◀ ["Cut To The Chase"](#)

- A** Talk about Mexican bands and fiestas. Children find a space. Call out different instruments for them to play (trumpet, guitar, maracas etc.). Encourage them to use different levels, e.g. if playing a trumpet bend the body up and down, if using maracas shake the instruments high and low, if playing the guitar turn around.
- B** Put the children in groups of four to make a band. Practice and fix the movements.
- C** Dancing with masks (see mask resource): Split the groups of four into pairs. One partner in each pair puts on a mask. The masked partner will be the leader and the other will follow. They dance carefully (because of mask) to the music showing the character of the mask, and after a minute or two they change over. Partners continue to change back and forth. Suggestions for movement may be called out from the side, and 'freezing' can be used so that they can watch each other and avoid any collisions. Tempo can be increased as they become accustomed to the mask.
- D** Children watch each other perform B and C and discuss the movement. (See resource for evaluation guidelines).

Cool Down

Follow my leader in pairs using the movements they have explored. Come to stillness and stretch arms, sides of body and upper and lower legs.

Week 4: The Antarctic and the Albatross

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Warm up ◀ ["Kingdom of the Fairies"](#)

Find your wings: children start in a space and then fly around the room, using their wings in different ways, e.g. long wings and soaring, short wings and flapping, alternate between soaring and flapping, gliding, diving (etc.)

Stretching

Stretch arms, sides of the body and upper and lower legs.

Main ◀ ["Kingdom of the Fairies"](#)

A (See Albatross resource)

The ice-lands: children move around the space showing the flow and shape of the ice through their bodies e.g. smooth long stretches of ice, different iceberg shapes, crevasses - suggest that children use all different levels and shapes to show this.

B First flight of the Albatross: guide the children through a simple story. The egg rocks in the nest and hatches. The chick looks around, stretches one wing and then the other. Try using both wings together. Maybe go back into the nest (it's so cold and white!) and then come up again. Eventually the chick gets up on his legs and turns around. At last he takes flight, stretching his long wings, gliding, soaring and diving. After a while, the chick returns to the nest.

C Put the children in pairs to fix the flight of the albatross. When they have done this ask them to work out a flying sequence together, using the Albatross flying methods.

D Children watch each other perform their sequences and discuss what they see. (See resources for evaluation guidelines)

Cool Down ◀ ["Kingdom of the Fairies"](#)

Put children into groups of four to make iceberg shape. They peel away from this shape to glide around the room, eventually coming to stillness. Stretch arms, sides of body and upper and lower legs.

Week 5: Native Americans

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Warm up ◀ ["Pow Wow"](#)

Children stand in a circle. Practice dancing Native American Indian style: Hop from one foot to another, whilst kicking backwards by bending at the knee. The body leans forward from the waist. All move in this style one-way around the circle and then the other. Do the same movement moving into the centre and out again.

Stretching

Stretch arms, sides of the body and upper and lower legs.

Main

A (Optional) Split the children into two teams. Do a Native American horse-riding relay race (*hint: children must not compromise the horse-riding movement for speed*).

B ◀ ["Pow Wow"](#)

Put the children into groups of four. As a group, make a wigwam and then a totem pole. Next find one or two movements to link the two shapes together, e.g. turn, roll on the floor or dance as if collecting wood for the fire. Finally, practice dancing around the totem pole Native American Indian style.

C Divide the children further into pairs. Choose a totem animal, e.g. eagle, horse, bear, rabbit (etc.) and find at least four different ways that the animal moves (*hint: think of the shape the animal makes and how its' body moves*). Fix and practice.

D The children watch each other perform their sequences and discuss the movement (*see resources for evaluation guidelines*).

Cool Down ◀ ["Pow Wow"](#)

Children come back into a circle. Move the arms from one side to another and up and down to show the rising and setting of the sun. Stretch the arms, sides of the body and upper and lower legs.

Week 6: The Desert

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Warm up ◀ ["Desert Rain"](#)

Children move around the space stretching their bodies and making different shapes whilst imagining it is very hot (hint: suggest how the heat might make them feel and how they will move slower than normal).

Stretching

Stretch arms, sides of the body and upper and lower legs.

Main ◀ ["Desert Rain"](#)

A Talk about the desert whilst showing some pictures to help visually. The Children find a space in the room by themselves. They begin curled up. It is night. With their bodies they show how the sun starts to rise until it is high up in the sky and very hot. Next they begin to travel around the room showing the shapes of sand dunes (hint: they can come together to make sand dune shapes). The wind blows and the sand dunes disappear or change their shape or even move to a different space in the room.

B Animals and plants in the desert: Put the children in pairs to explore the movements and shapes of the desert animals and plants, e.g. desert rats scurry, lizards stand on only two feet at time changing when the sand gets too hot, snakes slither and slide and cactuses are spiky and many different shapes. Practice moving from one shape to another.

C The children watch each other perform their sequences and discuss the movement (see resources for evaluation guidelines).

C Desert rain: All children to stand still in the room (it is too hot to move). Imagine it begins to rain and dance with pleasure at the refreshing feel of it. All the animals begin to play. Flowers and plants spring up and rivers run (hint: children can use the movement they have already explored and explore how a flower or plant grows quickly and what shapes it makes. Perhaps there are clusters of flowers).

Cool Down ◀ ["Desert Rain"](#)

Reverse the warm up: from sun up when it is hot to night time and you are curled up. Stretch the arms, sides of the body and upper and lower legs.

Resource 1

QCA Guidelines: Unit 1, Section 4

Evaluating and improving performance

Objectives

Children should learn:

- To talk about dance ideas inspired by different stimuli
- To copy, watch, and describe dance movement

Activities

- Teach the children to sit, watch each other dancing and talk about their dances.
- Encourage them to explain how the dances make them feel.
- Help the children to watch and describe actions and different qualities of movement.
- Ask them to describe what body actions they see and what body parts are being used.
- Ask them why they think particular actions have been chosen for a dance.
- Ask the children to talk about how they might be more expressive in their movement.

Outcomes

Children:

- Use simple dance vocabulary to describe movement
- Talk about dance, linking movement to moods, ideas and feelings

Resource 2

Lesson 1 - Chinese Dragon Dance

The Chinese Dragon

The Chinese dragon is a Chinese mythical creature, depicted as a long, scaled, snake-like creature with five claws. In contrast to the Western dragon which stands on four legs and which is usually portrayed as evil, the Chinese dragon has long been a potent symbol of auspicious power in Chinese folklore and art. The Chinese dragon is traditionally also the embodiment of the concept of yang (male) and associated with the weather as the bringer of rain and water in an agriculturally water-driven nation. Its female counterpart is the Fenghuang.

In the dance a team of people carry the dragon — which is an image of the Chinese dragon — on poles. The lead dancers lift, dip, thrust, and sweep the head, which may contain animated features controlled by a dancer and is sometimes rigged to belch smoke from pyrotechnic devices. The dance team mimics the supposed movements of this river spirit in a sinuous, undulating manner. The movements in a performance traditionally symbolise historical roles of dragons demonstrating power and dignity. The dragon dance is a highlight of Chinese New Year celebrations held worldwide in Chinatowns around the world.

Dragons are believed to bring good luck to people, which is reflected in their qualities - including great power, dignity, fertility, wisdom and auspiciousness. The appearance of a dragon is both frightening and bold but it has a benevolent disposition, and so eventually became an emblem to represent imperial authority.

Resource 3

Lesson 3 - Mexican Fiesta

Making Masks

The children can make masks in an earlier lesson. The masks can be any style, but cut extra-large eyeholes so that they can see enough to dance safely. Masks must fit comfortably over the head and not slip - so that they follow the head movements without getting in the way or falling off. The masks can represent clowns, animals, Gods or whatever has been inspired by the 'Mexican Fiesta' lesson plan (Suggestion: find some pictures of Mexican festivals and culture on the internet or in books/magazines). For children who are not accustomed to dancing, the mask may help them to feel relaxed and more comfortable with their movements and with the other children.

Resource 4

Lesson 4 - The Antarctic And The Albatross

The Albatross

Albatrosses are considered by many to be the most majestic of all Antarctic birds. Their long, narrow wings are strikingly graceful. Equally impressive are the large heads featuring massive hooked bills. Their bodies are mainly white and they have long necks, short legs, and mostly short tails. Albatrosses are supreme gliders; with modified wings to maximize the updrafts and thermals over the open ocean. Albatrosses are best observed during rough weather, when high waves create strong uplifting air currents, enabling them to remain aloft with hardly a wing beat for hours on end.

Albatross chicks take a long time to fledge. In the case of the great albatrosses, it can take up to 280 days; even for the smaller albatrosses, it takes anywhere between 140 and 170 days. Like many seabirds, albatross chicks will gain enough weight to be heavier than their parents, and prior to fledging they use these reserves to build up body condition (particularly growing all their flight feathers), usually fledging at the same weight as their parents. Albatross chicks fledge on their own and receive no further help from their parents, who return to the nest after fledging, unaware their chick has left. Studies of juveniles dispersing at sea have suggested an innate migration behaviour, a genetically coded navigation route, which helps young birds when they are first out at sea.

Most famous and largest of the albatrosses, the "wanderer" roams the Southern Ocean. They often follow visiting ships, wheeling and floating hypnotically at a distance for hours at a time. Effortlessly gliding on the wind, they are capable of round trips of thousands of kilometers over several days. They swoop low over ocean swells, dipping down when the sea falls and rising when the wave rises. Their wings are capable of "locking" into an extended position, thereby reducing strain over long flights.

Albatrosses can live to be 80 - 85 years old and they mate for life. Once they leave the nest they may not return to land again for 7 to 10 years when they return to the island where they were born. They have a white head, neck and body, a wedge-shaped tail, and a large pink beak. Plumage varies through its life, from dark brown in the first year to almost fully white in old age.

Albatross Facts:

- Albatrosses spend the better part of their lives on the wing, gliding and circling the wind systems of the Southern Ocean.
- There is thought to be a total of 750,000 breeding pairs of the 13 species of these massive birds.

Dancing Around the World

- Adult Albatrosses share incubation, brooding and feeding of the single chick.
- Adults have been recorded flying up to 550 miles per day at speeds of 50 mph, and in a single foraging flight they can cover an incredible 1800 to 9300 miles, a distance greater than the diameter of the earth.
- Albatross mortality is high in the first year, but those that survive often surpass 50 years, making them one of the most well-travelled animals in the world.
- In today's world, their main threat is being snared in gill nets and caught on logline hooks.
- In folklore the Albatross carried the soul of dead mariners. Should a sailor kill the bird, bad luck would fall upon him for the rest of his natural life. This belief was not universally held, as Albatross feet were once used as tobacco pouches.