

presents

The Nutcracker – Act I

Performed by

Texas Ballet Theater

For Third Grade Students

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Introduction

Dear Teachers,

We are thrilled to bring Texas Ballet Theater's magical performance of *The Nutcracker Ballet* to third graders. So many beautiful memories are made each holiday season during performances of this immortal childhood favorite.

Because the entire performance is over 2 hours long, we will present only the first act, which is approximately 45-50 minutes in length. While the first act does not include "Waltz of the Flowers" or the "Russian Trepak," there are still many special moments in store for them. Please introduce your students to all the music found in the *Nutcracker Suite*, encouraging them to imagine what the ballet dancers would do during these sections. This is some of the world's most favorite music and should be a part of every child's repertoire.

Many TEKS objectives can be met with the material covered in this study guide. We have listed them collectively so that you may choose those that fit the needs of your students. We have also included two versions of the story—one that more advanced students may want to read or can be read to the class as a whole and one that many third grade students can read. Choose the one that is better suited to your students. But please DO read one before coming to the performance!

Language Arts and Reading:

- 110.5 Student listens attentively
- 1A To enjoy and appreciate
- D To critically interpret and evaluate
- E To hear selections from classic sources
- 2B Gains knowledge of his culture and others that reflect customs and cultures
- 10A Responds to stories and poems that reflect understanding through movement, music, art, drama
- 11G Compares print and dramatic versions of story
- 13A/B Connects his own experiences and cultures with that of others

Social Studies

- 14A/B Student understands the importance of writers and artists to the cultural heritage of a community

Music

- 5A/C Student identifies aurally presented excerpts of music from diverse periods and cultures
- 6A/B Student defines criteria for evaluating a performance and exhibiting audience etiquette

We will see you in December. Please call or e-mail us if you should have any questions or problems.

Yours truly,



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The Story

The Story of the Nutcracker Ballet

It was December 24, Christmas Eve at the Stahlbaum home. Clara and her brother Fritz were excited because the Christmas Eve party could not start until their guests came.

“They’re here, they are finally here, Fritz!” Clara cried. The living room doors flew open with a ‘bang!’ The children watched in awe as the lights on the tree sparkled.

“Oh! It is the most colorful and beautiful tree in the world!” cried the children. There were so many presents that the children squealed with joy.

Fritz grabbed a toy horse on a stick and danced around the room. Clara loved her beautiful china doll.

Godfather Drosselmeyer took out his big gifts. He pulled out a gigantic box and out walked a lifesized toy soldier! When Drosselmeyer wound up the toy soldier everyone laughed as it marched around the room.

Drosselmeyer handed Clara her gift from under the tree. It was a wooden nutcracker with a white fluffy beard and a happy, bright smile. Clara loved this gift more than any other gift. Fritz called the nutcracker ugly because he was jealous and jammed a large nut in the nutcracker. Crunch, crunch! A few teeth fell out.

“You are breaking him!” shouted Clara. “Have your old dumb nutcracker,” laughed Fritz. “It doesn’t even work!” Clara was very sad and wrapped a ribbon around him. She said that she would care for her nutcracker forever.

That night, when the party was over and everyone was sleeping, Clara quietly went downstairs to the living room. The grandfather clock struck. Clara looked up and saw that godfather Drosselmeyer was sitting on it!

“What are you doing up there?” Clara cried. All around her magic happened! The toys grew. The tree grew and grew. The things in the living room were all now very big. The nutcracker was now bigger than Clara.

Just then an army of mice ran out. They were led by their king who had seven heads! The mice lifted their swords and marched up to the toy cabinet. They would fight them. All of the toys rushed out. The nutcracker was their leader.

They began to fight. Clara was sad to see that the army of mice was beating the nutcracker’s army. Three mice grabbed the nutcracker’s sword. The mouse king laughed and laughed.

Clara cried, “Oh my poor nutcracker!” Then she threw her shoe at the Mouse King and the mice disappeared.

Clara turned to look at the nutcracker. He had turned into a handsome prince.

“My beautiful lady,” the prince said, kneeling in front of Clara. “You saved my life. Now I shall take you to the Land of Sweets!”

The prince led Clara by the hand into Christmas Wood Forest. All around them was snow and ice. Snowflakes fell from the sky but they tasted like sugar cookies. Lovely snow fairies waltzed all around them.



A beautiful lady dressed in white met them. “She is the Sugar Plum Fairy,” said the prince. The Sugar Plum Fairy knew that Clara had saved the prince from the Mouse King and was happy to meet her.

“We shall have a party!” she said. The handsome prince took Clara through the beautiful candy kingdom and sat her on a golden throne. Clara and the prince watched as all of the prince’s loyal servants came out to dance for them. All of them were made of candy and spices—chocolate and peppermint, lemon drop and gingerbread.

From Russia came the Cossack dancers. Chinese dancers jumped out of big teapots. Mother Ginger wore a wide skirt and her children ran out from beneath it. Clara laughed and laughed at all she saw. Clara watched as the Prince and Sugar Plum Fairy danced.

It was time to go. Clara and her nutcracker prince climbed into the magic sleigh. All of the candy people waved goodbye and the Land of Sweets disappeared!

Clara soon woke up in her own bed. She never spoke a word about the Land of Sweets to anyone. She knew her memories and love for the nutcracker would stay with her always.

The End



Photo by Ellen Appel

Nutcracker Ballet-

The real story

Who wrote The Nutcracker?

That is a complicated question! **E.T.A. Hoffmann** was the writer of the original story of *The Nutcracker*. He was a writer, composer, painter and lawyer who was born in 1776 in **Germany**. He loved to write fantasies and horror stories.

Stories about enchanted nutcrackers had appeared in European folk tales for a number of years, but it was Hoffmann's version that was adapted into the tale we know so well. The first known **nutcracker** in a form we recognize today was made in Germany about 1750. Nutcrackers became a part of Christmas traditions because nuts painted gold were a popular tree decoration. Something decorative was needed to crack the nut so people could enjoy the meat inside.

Enrichment Activity

Write the word N-U-T-C-R-A-C-K-E-R on a sheet of paper. How many words can you make out of the letters?

Who made the story we know today?

The Nutcracker story Hoffmann wrote in 1816 was frightening. The little girl's name is Marie and she is punished for going downstairs in the middle of the night. Other bad things happen throughout the tale. The **French** writer **Alexander Dumas** rewrote the story, changing the little girl's name to Clara and making it much more cheerful. In his version, the Nutcracker Prince takes Clara to the Land of Snow and the Kingdom of Sweets. When she awakens the next morning, Clara has to decide whether it was a dream or a real adventure.

How did it become a ballet?

In 1890 **Peter Tchaikovsky** [chae-KAWFF-skee], the great Russian composer, and **Marius Petipa** [peh-tee-PAH], the famous choreographer, decided to write a ballet, based on the nutcracker story. Petipa wrote very precise directions to Tchaikovsky about what he wanted in the music.

Marius Petipa is known as the father of classical ballet. He was born into a family of dancers in France. After dancing in France, Brussels, and Madrid, he moved to Russia where he lived for more than 50 years and elevated Russian ballet to international fame. When Petipa became ill during rehearsals, his assistant, **Lev Ivanov**, designed the final dances for the ballet.



E.T.A. Hoffmann, From personal.denison.edu/~dillmann/images/eta.gif



Alexander Dumas, From www.hampenyt.dk/alexander-dumas-den-%E6ldre.jpg

For the music of the ballet, Peter Tchaikovsky discovered an unusual instrument called a celeste [**che-LEHST**] in Paris and had it shipped to Russia. It looks like a small keyboard but sounds like small tinkling bells. He felt that these unusual sounds were perfect for a fairytale and especially the music of the Sugar Plum Fairy. He kept the celeste a secret until the premiere, where it was a huge sensation. His inventive and colorful use of other instruments, such as a child's rattle, cuckoo, trumpet and miniature drum, as well as the harp, have made the music alone a popular favorite.

The first performances of the ballet were not successful, however, and the ballet stayed in Russia until it traveled to London and later to the United States in 1944. The first performance in the U.S. was in San Francisco. The great choreographer, George Balanchine introduced his version of *The Nutcracker* to New York City Ballet in 1954 and it has been a beloved holiday tradition ever since.

So, a German tale, rewritten by a Frenchman, inspired a French choreographer living in Russia to work with a Russian composer to make an international masterpiece which lives on and on in the hearts and imaginations of children all over the world.



Peter Tchaikovsky, From
www.ihavelovedyouso.com/tchaikovsky.gif



Marius Petipa, From
300online.ru/fr/foreign/petipa.jpg



Melodies

Melodies for Nutcracker

Overture: Played by strings, woodwinds and triangle.

March: in 2. The children march around pretending to be soldiers. This is played by woodwinds, strings, brass (trumpets and French horn, especially), cymbals and flute.

A musical score for the March, featuring Trumpets and Violins. The tempo is marked *Tempo di marcia viva*. The score is in 2/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *mf*, and *f*.

Galop: Tired of marching, the children dance a galop. This may be a solo for Clara

B Musical score for the Galop, featuring Violins. The tempo is marked *Presto*. The score is in 3/4 time and includes a dynamic marking of *p*.

This is interrupted by the return of their parents in fancy dress

C Musical score for the return of the parents, featuring Violins. The tempo is marked *Andante*. The score is in 3/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *pesante*, and *sf*.

Soon the grown ups are dancing to a well-known French traditional song

D Musical score for the French traditional song, featuring Violins. The tempo is marked *Allegro*. The score is in 3/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *D.C.*. The lyrics are in French:

Bon voy - a - ge, cher Du - mol - let, à Saint Ma - lo dé - bar - quez sans nau - fra - ge!
 Bon voy - a - ge, cher Du - mol - let, et fix - ez - vous dans ce
 lieu, s'il vous plaît! Là vous ver - rez les deux mains dans les po - ches, Al - lez ve -
 Des gens bien faits, des tor - tus, des ban - cret - ches,
 nir des sa - ges et des fous. Nul ne se - ra jam - bé si bien que vous.

Herr Drosselmayer enters. His 'tune' is a dry, fantastic tune

E Musical score for Herr Drosselmayer's tune, featuring Violas. The tempo is marked *Andantino*. The score is in 3/4 time and includes a dynamic marking of *f*.

When he fetches presents for the children, his melody turns into a waltz



A doll and a nutcracker emerge from the boxes and dance a waltz, which ends in a presto (very fast)



Drosselmayer has given Clara a nutcracker, which Fritz wants. At first she is delighted



But at the climax of this tune, Fritz breaks it. Clara sings a lullaby to her toy



The same bar of accompaniment is repeated all through this melody. Clara's lullaby is twice interrupted by Fritz and the boys aggressively playing soldiers and annoying the girls (trumpet and drum). To put an end to the squabbling, it is suggested that the grown ups dance.



To the sounds of Clara's lullaby, the guests depart. The sleepy children go to bed. Soon Clara returns to the empty, moonlit room in her pajamas. She cannot sleep and wants to see her broken nutcracker once more. The dark frightens her. The clock strikes twelve and she hears mice (bass clarinet and low bassoons, with squeaks of the piccolo).

Suddenly the Christmas tree grows larger and larger (to a phrase on the violins ascending) and as the music gets louder Clara becomes more and more frightened. We are sharing her dream. There is a sudden bang and toy

soldiers (brass) and the mice (piccolo squeaks) join battle, Nutcracker leading the soldiers and a Mouse King leading the mice. Clara saves the day by throwing her slipper at the Mouse King; the mice scurry away, leaving Nutcracker and his men. The Nutcracker changes into a handsome prince and invites Clara to go with him to the Kingdom of Sweets.

The Prince and Clara make their way to the forest to this tune.



Waltz of the Snowflakes



The children will see only Act I of this production. However, we have included the Act II themes of the dances, since these are something with which every child should be familiar and are an important part of the Nutcracker Suite.

Act II

At the Court of the Sugar Plum Fairy

This tune is played high on the violins with harp and celeste. Clara and the Prince arrive to fluttering music of flutes. Clara is telling the Sugar Plum Fairy about the battle between the Nutcracker and the Mouse King and we hear the battle rhythm low on the bass strings and mouse squeaks on the piccolo. Then we hear the various 'treats' dances from all over the world—



Photo by Ellen Appel

Spanish Chocolate: on trumpet



Arabian Coffee: Low, smooth, mysterious Oriental sounds played by clarinets and violins in 3.



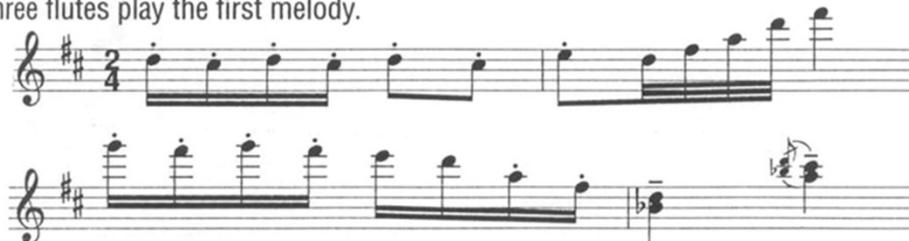
Chinese Tea: played by high flutes over low, trotting bassoons in 2.

Russian trepak: in 2. It is very vigorous with broad range of dynamics between loud and soft. The music gets louder when the dancers jump and faster as the piece progresses. The timpani (kettle drums) play a lot in this dance.



Les Mirlitons (The Reed Flutes): The first section is for 3 flutes with an English horn solo; the middle section is for brass and percussion. All in 2. The music is graceful, light, playful and bouncy.

Three flutes play the first melody.



Mother Ginger and Her Many Children: Form is ABA. Over a tambourine this music is heard—



This is probably a French folk song: the middle section used the following song:

R *Fairly fast*

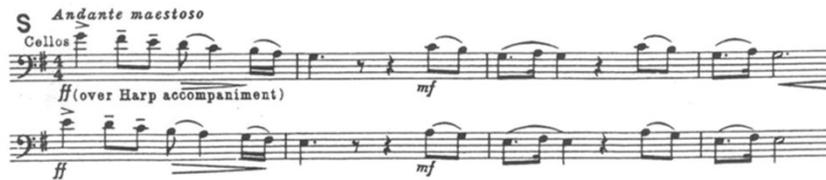
mf Ca-det Rous-selle a trois mai-sons, Ca-det Rous-selle a trois mai-sons,
Qui n'ont ni pou-tres, ni chev-rons, Qui n'ont ni pou-tres, ni chev-rons.

sf C'est pour lo-ger les hir-on-del-les, Que di-rez-vous d'Ca-det Rous-sel-le?

ff Ah! Ah! Ah mais vrai-ment! Ca-det Rous-selle est bon en-fant.

Waltz of the Flowers: in 3. Introduction with harp and strings, then a full-length waltz with horns and clarinets.

Pas de Deux: For the Prince and The Sugar Plum Fairy



Variation for the Prince—a tarantella

Variation for the Sugar Plum Fairy—the famous celeste solo.

Coda for both dancers

Final Waltz



Special Terms

Waltz	a German and Austrian couple dance in 3. Known for its elegance, the downbeat is heavily accented
March	music designed to keep marching of processions together, usually with strong emphatic downbeats, in 2 or 4
Galop	a fast French dance in 2/4 that is often the finale of a piece. Often done by couples in an embrace which form a line and move rapidly across the stage with fast steps and quick turns. Therefore, the name “gallop.”
Coda	the summation of a section of music
Tarantella	an Italian folkdance in a rapid, accelerating 6/8 with shifts between major and minor
Pas de deux	a dance for two dancers

From *Ballet Music* by Roger Fiske. George Harrap & Co., 1958.
and *The Music Connection* by Silver Burdett. Grades 1, 2, 3.



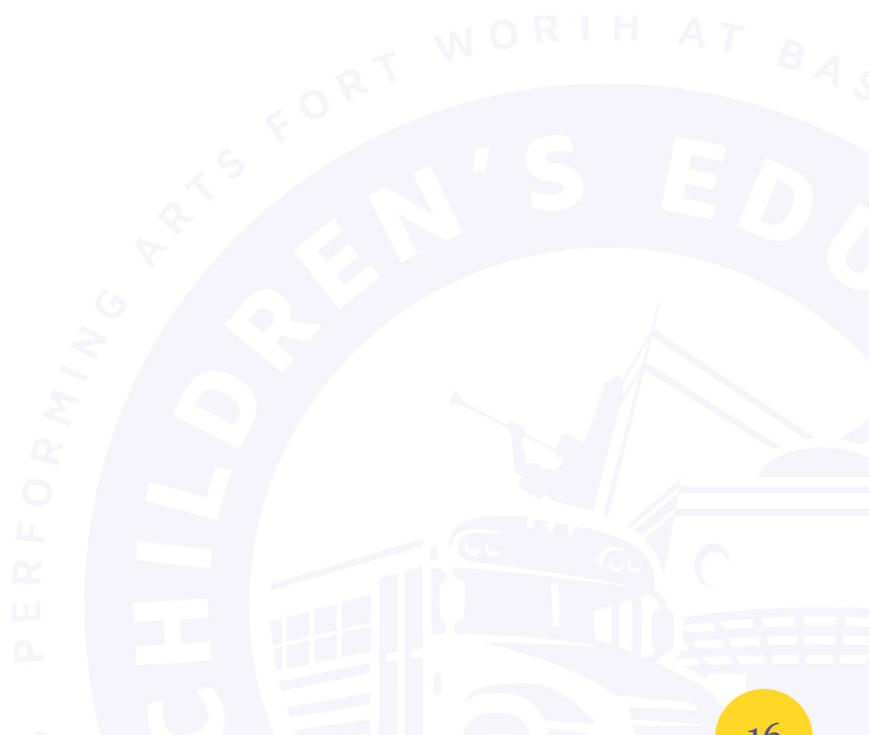
Listening Maps

Listening Maps

Dear Teachers—

There are several listening maps in various music textbooks which will help students to identify the form of various selections from *The Nutcracker Suite*. Please take the time to find and use them. They will aid your students immensely in their comprehension of the music!

March	Silver Burdett-Ginn Grade 3 Older Edition
Russian Dance	Music Memory Bulletin UIL 1994-1995
Russian Dance (Trepak)	Silver Burdett Scott Foresman Grade 3 Page 280-281 with transparency
Waltz of the Flowers	Macmillan/McGraw-Hill 1991
Waltz of the Flowers	Silver Burdett Scott Foresman Grade 6 Page 322-325 with transparency





Ballet

Tell me about Ballet

What is ballet?

Ballet is **dance and music** that tells a story, idea or feelings.

When and where did ballet begin?

The first ballet was performed in France in 1581. There were elaborate celebrations in the palaces and courts of kings and queens. Along with dances, there were parades, processions, and music. Dance, and especially ballet, developed in this atmosphere.

Who started the first ballet school?

In 1661, King Louis XIV of France founded the first ballet school called the Royal Academy of Dance. This is why we use so many French words in ballet, such as *pointe*, *corps de ballet* and *reverence*.

Read on to discover the meaning of these words and more—

What is turn-out?

In ballet, the legs and feet must face to the side. Turning them out from the hips is called turn-out. This is a must for every dancer! It takes years of practice. Originally turn-out was used to show off the calves and fancy-heeled shoes of the male dancers.



From www.prima-soft.com/new/images/701-Gala'-Web-photo-2n.jpg



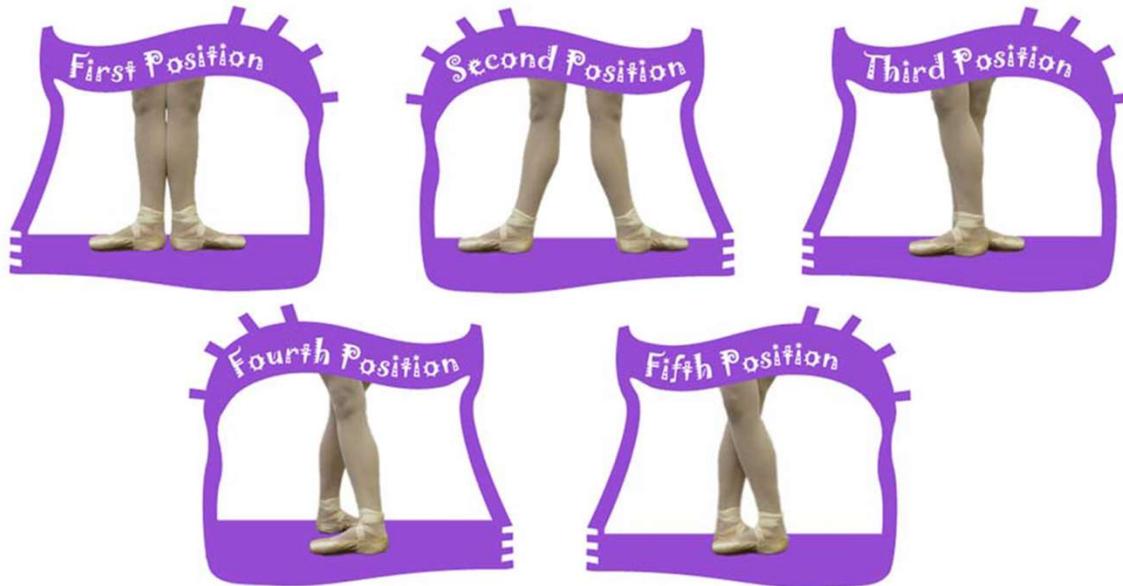
King Louis XIV in costume for his role as the Sun God, Apollo From *Ballet* by Kate Castle; Kingfisher

What is on pointe?

This means to dance on the tips of the toes. Maria Taglioni was the first dancer to dance on pointe. She did this in the 1800s. Ballet shoes were very soft then, so dancing on the toes was much more difficult.

What are the five positions for a dancer's feet?

Most ballet steps begin and end in one of these five positions. This helps the dancer's weight stay evenly placed no matter what position the body is in.



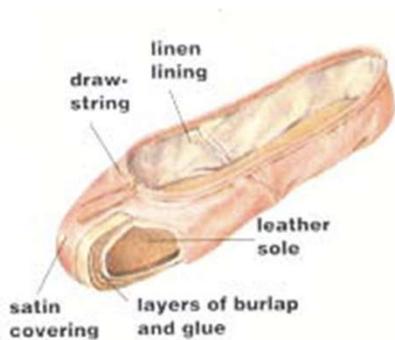
From <http://www.pbt.org/kids/positions.html>

Practice these positions yourself and don't forget about turn-out.

Does anyone in your class take ballet lessons? They can help you by demonstrating.

What kind of shoes are worn in ballet?

Ballet shoes are made of soft leather (or maybe satin). Pointe shoes are needed only when the teacher feels that a student has developed her strength and skill and is ready to dance on pointe.



From *Ballet* by Kate Castle

What happens in ballet class?

First dancers warm up gently at the *barre*. A *barre* is a wooden rail on the wall about waist high. The *barre* helps the dancers in keeping balance. Full-length mirrors on the wall help dancers watch themselves so they can correct their mistakes.

To practice a *barre* exercise in your class, stand and hold on the back of your chair.

A good warm-up exercise is a *plié* [*plee-aye*] because it stretches all the muscles in your legs.

To do a *demi- plié* (*half knee bend*):

Face your chair (*barre*), put both hands on the chair back, have your feet in first position. Slowly bend your knees as far as you can without your heels coming off the floor. Slowly straighten back up

Do this same exercise in second position.



<http://www.ballettspass.de/images/plie03.jpg>

What keeps dancers from slipping?

A box of rosin is always in class or on the stage for dancers. Rosin is a white powder made from tree sap that sticks to ballet shoes and prevents slipping.

Why don't dancers get dizzy?

When dancers spin around and around, they use a trick called spotting, so that they do not become dizzy. They fix their eyes on one spot in the room or theatre. Then, each time they turn, they have to return their eyes to the spot as quickly as possible.

You are probably a great spinner and you probably are great at getting dizzy, too. Try the dancers' trick of spotting. See if it helps you avoid becoming dizzy and giddy...



<http://www.informadanza.com/glosario/img/demiplie.jpg>

What is *révérence* [ray-vay-rahns]?

This is the formal way to say **thank you** in class to your teacher or if you are on stage; to thank the audience. Boys stand tall and poised with their heads bowed. Girls put one foot behind them, then bend at the knees, as in a curtsy.

Practice *révérence* in your classroom. Have some members pretend to be the audience and give applause.

Draw a picture that shows your ideas about how a ballet classroom looks. Remember to add dancers. Are they at the *barre*, doing centrework or jumps? Dress them properly. Add music, rosin, mirrors.

There are many good pictures, activities and areas where you may learn more by visiting the Texas Ballet Theater's web site at www.texasballettheater.org. Go to the Kids Area and click on each area. To hear terms pronounced, simply go to "Adagio to Tutu" click on each word and you will hear the word spoken in French. Other interesting areas are "Ballet History," "Ballets," and "Goodies."



From *Ballet* by Kate Castle

Tell me about going to the Ballet

Who writes the music and the dance steps?

A **composer** writes the music. It is called a score. A **choreographer** creates the dance by selecting ballet steps to go with the music. These steps are called the **choreography**. A famous choreographer in America is George Balanchine.

Who plays the music at the ballet?

Usually an **orchestra** plays the music for the ballet. You cannot see them very well because they are in the **orchestra pit**. Sometimes the music is played by a pianist or it is previously recorded music. In this performance the music will be pre-recorded.

Do you know what to call the person with the baton who leads the orchestra? (conductor)

What types of dancers should I look for at the ballet?

The **corps de ballet** is the large group of dancers. These dancers perform together. In *Swan Lake* they are the swans.

Soloists are on the level above the *corps*. They may or may not become principals.

Principals dance the leading roles in the ballet. In *Cinderella*, both Cinderella and the Prince are principal dancers. The female principal is also called **prima ballerina**. The male can be called a **premier danseur**. Very few dancers are good enough to become principal dancers.

What movements should I look for in the dances?

Solos

When the principals and soloists dance alone it is a **solo**. *How many people does it take for a solo?*

Lightness, on *pointe*

The ballerina will show light and graceful movements and dance on *pointe*.

Strength, elevation

The male will emphasize strength and nobility in his dance. He will perform turns, jumps and leaps. How high he jumps is called **elevation**.

Jumps

Jumps begin and end with a *demi-plié*. This helps the dancer spring and land gently.



<http://balletbc.com/Chris/images/GrandeJete.jpg>



From The World of Ballet by Judy Tatchell

Adage

There are also *adage* movements to watch. These movements are slow and show balance and “line.” Line is the flowing curves your body makes. *If you know the musical term for “slow,” perhaps you will think of this word when you see **adage** movements. What is the musical word for “slow”?* (*adagio*)

Pas de deux (pah-de-duh)

A *pas de deux* is a dance for two—a male and a female dancer. The male dancer must support and lift the ballerina in the air. He must have strength; she must have balance. A *pas de deux* requires precision and timing.

Do you think this kind of dancing together requires a lot of practice?

Think of the Olympic ice skaters and dancers you have seen.

What do you know about the amount of time they have to practice?

How do dancers tell the story?

Because there are no speaking parts in ballet, dancers can tell the story through their dance movements and through actions called **mime**.

You probably have practiced or seen mime before.

What movements do you know?

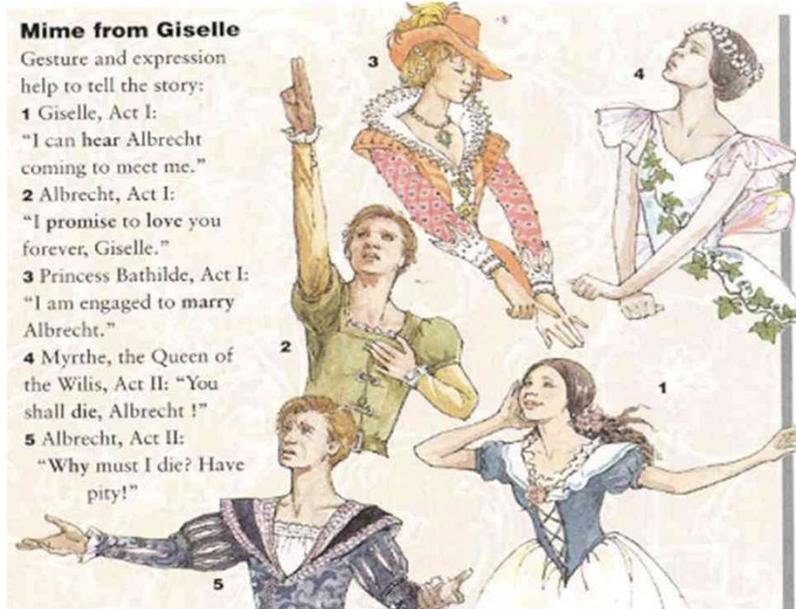
Can you tell a story to your class using mime?

Make up a simple situation and tell it through mime.

It does not need to be long.

Practice the mime movements below that many dancers use.

Look for these when you watch a story ballet.



From Ballet by Kate Castle

What about costumes and make up?

The most familiar costume in ballet is the **tutu**. These may have short or long skirts. Because the ballet costumes may have to last for years, they have to be very well made and have good care. Costumes, make up and hair can tell you a lot about the story of the ballet.

What do you expect the dancers to look like in the ballet you will see?

Design a costume for one of the characters in the ballet.



Photo by Ellen Appel

Why do men and women wear make up on stage?

Make up helps the dancers' faces and eyes be seen by the audience. Otherwise, the bright stage lights would wash out the faces of the dancers. Make up also helps create characters such as an old person or a creature.

Are scenery and lighting part of the story?

The scenery and lighting help to give clues about the story and the mood—whether it is cheery and happy, or sad and spooky. A spotlight follows the principal dancers, highlighting their moves for the audience. The lights are called a rig and are either at the side or hung over the stage. Stagehands must hang the lights for each separate show, based on what the lighting designer has requested.

What scenery would you expect to see in the ballet you will see?

What kind of mood would warm lights (reds and yellows) set? Blues?

Look for the lights when you attend the ballet.

What colors do you expect to see?

Lights on the side are easy to see.

Does the spotlight technician have to know the ballet well? Why?

Use a lamp in your classroom as a spotlight.

Choose a spotlight technician.

Have another student create a dance as the technician tries to follow the dancer's movement.

Is it harder than you imagined it would be?

Now have the dancer and technician agree on where the dancer will move.

Is it easier to follow the dancer with the light if the technician knows the dance?



The Composer

Peter Tchaikovsky

1840-1893

The most popular 19th century Russian composer—ever!

Peter Tchaikovsky was born in the Russian town of Votkinsk in 1840. He begged for piano lessons as a young boy after hearing music by Mozart. He thought that Mozart's music was the most perfect music written. But his father didn't think that music was a suitable career for a young man, so he was forced to study law. When he was away at law school, his mother died. The sadness of her death caused him to compose his first music. Soon after that he gave up the study of law and became a full-time musician.

His music was written during the **Romantic** period. Composers in the Romantic period wrote music that reflected their feelings. But, Romantic didn't necessarily mean it was written about feelings of love. Often romantic composers wrote music about stories or poems or pictures.

Tchaikovsky wrote many beautiful pieces of music. Some of his most famous pieces were his ballets--*The Nutcracker Suite*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Swan Lake*. He also wrote

symphonies, the *1812 Overture*, concertos and several operas. Some of the most well-loved music in the world was written by Tchaikovsky. But he was often a very unhappy man.

Tchaikovsky had constant headaches and indigestion. He always believed he was going to die an early death. He was often frightened and depressed, but he was most frightened when conducting his own music. He was terrified that he would literally *lose* his head--that it would go flying off in the middle of a performance! So, he would hold on to it with his left hand while beating time with his right.

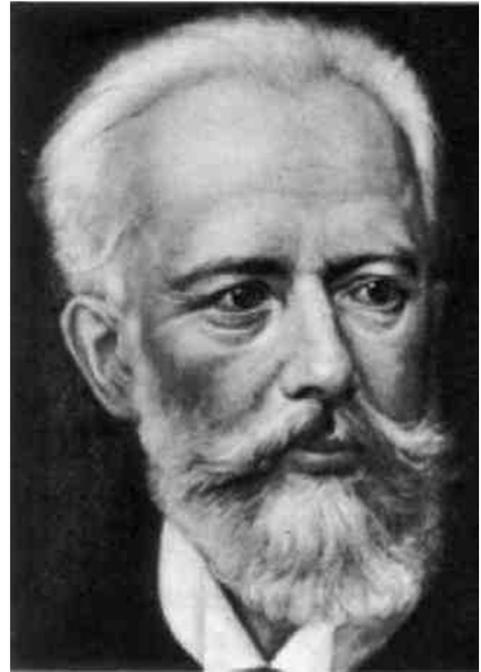
There were many unusual facts about Peter Tchaikovsky. But one of the most unusual facts was that he had a wealthy patroness, a woman who supported him while he wrote music. Madame von Meck loved his music and wanted to make it possible for him to write more. However, she made a rule--they must never meet. Peter went along with Madame von Meck's strange request, and as a result they wrote hundreds of letters to each other over the years and became best friends. And he was able to write some of his best music and not worry about money. He wrote the music to *The Nutcracker Suite* in 1892. The first performances were not a success. He died at age 53 from cholera when he drank contaminated water, not ever knowing that he had composed the most popular ballet ever written.

For more information, please read--

Peter Tchaikovsky, Getting to know the World's Greatest Composers by Mike Venezia. Chicago: Children's Press, 1994.

Lives of the Musicians; Good Times, Bad Times, and What the Neighbors Thought by Kathleen Krull. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1993.

Tchaikovsky Discovers America audiotape and book by Douglas Cowling. Toronto: Classical Kids, 1993.



From edumusic.free.fr/Images/tchaikovsky.gif



Activities

Art and Ballet Activities

Degas and “La Petite Danseur” (1880)

Marie van Goethem, a shy girl, thin and not very pretty, was just a “rat”* in the chorus of the Paris Opera. She believed that she would never be noticed. However, the famous painter, Edgar Degas, chose Marie as his subject as he looked for the pose that Paris would never forget. Degas, known to many as “Monsieur Terrible,” believed in Marie and sketched her many times from many different angles in what dancers call “fourth position.”

As he worked on the sketches he knew that a one-dimensional painting would not satisfactorily show the arch of Marie’s back, her clasped hands or her long, black hair. His solution was to create a sculpture.

Degas began with a wire structure almost as big as Marie and then covered it with wax. The most surprising element of this sculpture, however, was that Degas then dressed the sculpture in real silk and satin, with real hair and slippers. All who viewed this sculpture were shocked and amazed. “The Little Dancer” had come to life.

As for Marie, no one knows if she ever saw the sculpture; but because of Degas’ confidence in her, she did blossom as a dancer at the Paris ballet.

“La Petite Danseur” is now housed in New York at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. There are also many bronze versions in museums around the world.

*Students at the Paris Opera Ballet School were traditionally known as *Les Petits Rats* (“the little rats”).

Activities

1. Read *Marie in Fourth Position* by Littlesugar (the story of Degas and “The Little Dancer”). Note that the book’s paintings resemble the paintings of Degas.
2. Discuss the life and times of the late 1800s as depicted in the book. Compare this with current events in the U.S.
3. Look at illustrations of the five foot positions in ballet or have a dance student demonstrate them. Then have the class practice these positions.





Degas and “The Dancing Class” (1875)

Dancers in white tutus frame the back and sides of the painting. They listen to the old ballet master who leans on a cane at the center right of the painting. On the left a small dog sniffs a dancer’s leg; she holds a fan with red accents. On top of the piano another dancer scratches her back while the next dancer reads a letter. Across the room several mothers or chaperones are seen; one hugs a dancer. The watering can under the piano is where Degas signed his name. (The old ballet master is a former dancer. Although men were ballet dancers; Degas simply chose not to paint male dancers.)

From www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/degas/ballet/degas.classe-danse.jpg

Degas and “Dance Foyer at the Opera in the Rue Le Peletier” (1872)

Degas painted many rehearsals or dance classes. This painting features his friend, ballet master Louis Merante. Also included are a violinist, several dancers at the barre, two dancers at the notice board, a dancer receiving instructions from Monsieur Merante, a glimpse of a dancer behind the door, and an empty chair in the foreground. The red in the fan and dancer’s sash is echoed in Degas’ signature.



From www.mezzo-mondo.com/arts/mm/degas/DEEO01.html

Activities

1. Look at a picture of today's dancers rehearsing and note their clothing or have a ballet student describe or show what he/she wears for rehearsal.
2. Why do today's students wear leotards and tights. Leg warmers or maybe track suits? For flexibility and to allow the teachers to see the dancers' movements and line. Muscles should be kept warm until they are used and warmed up—think about baseball pitchers who wear a jacket when not pitching.
3. Compare today's rehearsal clothes with the rehearsal tutus painted in the Degas dance class.
4. Also compare the rehearsal tutus in the book, Marie in Fourth Position, with the above paintings and pictures. Make other comparisons among the illustrations and the paintings of Degas.
5. How have the hairstyles of ballet dancers changed since Degas' time? Hair is now often kept short or swept back for a clean look that allows the face to be seen clearly and to give the neck a long line.
6. Do ballet dancers today ever wear tutus in class? Do they wear jewelry? Why? Only to get the feel for the tutu that will be worn on stage and to allow the male partner to practice lifts without the tutu getting in the way. Dancers do not wear jewelry in rehearsal or performance. Jewelry can scratch the dancers or get caught on costumes.



Photo by Ellen Appel

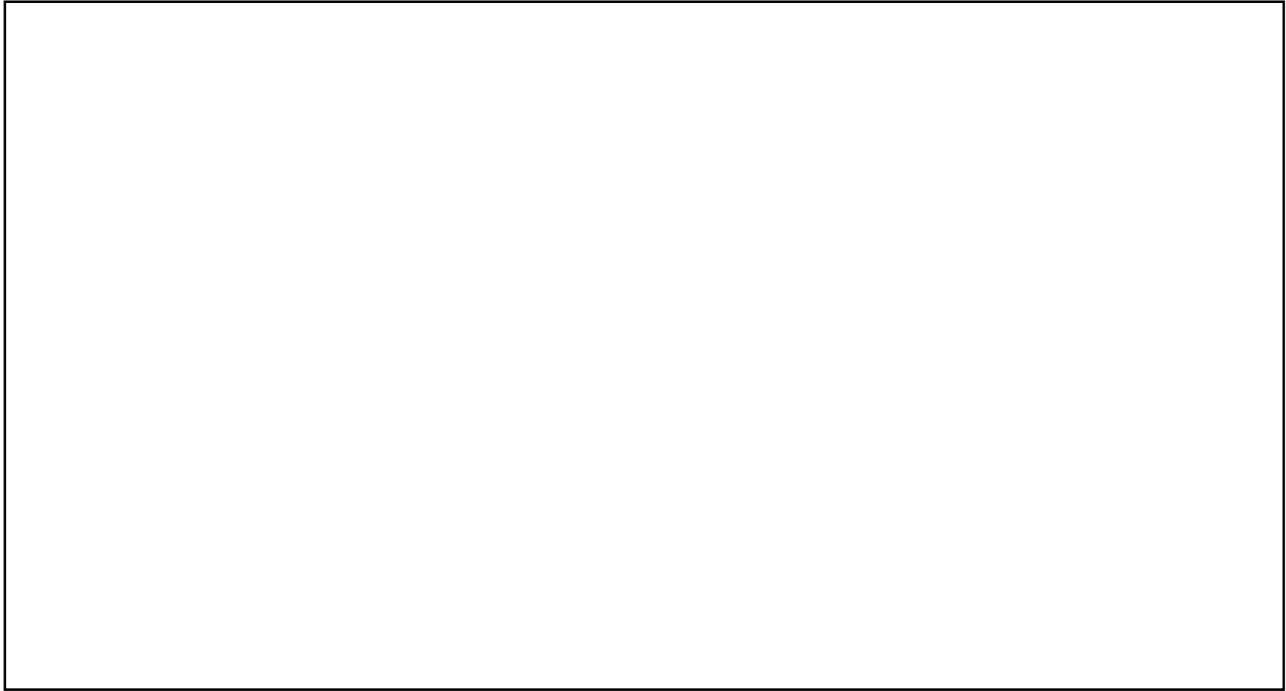
Edgar Degas

An Artist with a Different Point of View

1. Look at a print of Renoir's *The Little Dancer (1874)*
What is in the center of the painting? _____
2. Next look at a print of Degas' *Dancers at the Old Opera House (1877)*.
What is in the center of this painting? _____
3. Degas has concentrated not on the dancers or the audience, but on the stage and the scene. He has given you, the viewer, a different place from which to watch the ballet. You are watching from:
_____ a. the first row of the audience
_____ b. the back row of the audience
_____ c. the side or wings of the stage
4. In order to paint this point of view, Degas spent a long time observing dancers and their movements. He made many sketches of these movements and poses and then he created the painting from his sketches and from his memory.

A. Why do you think he chose this view to paint?

B. What do you think he saw that he chose not to paint?

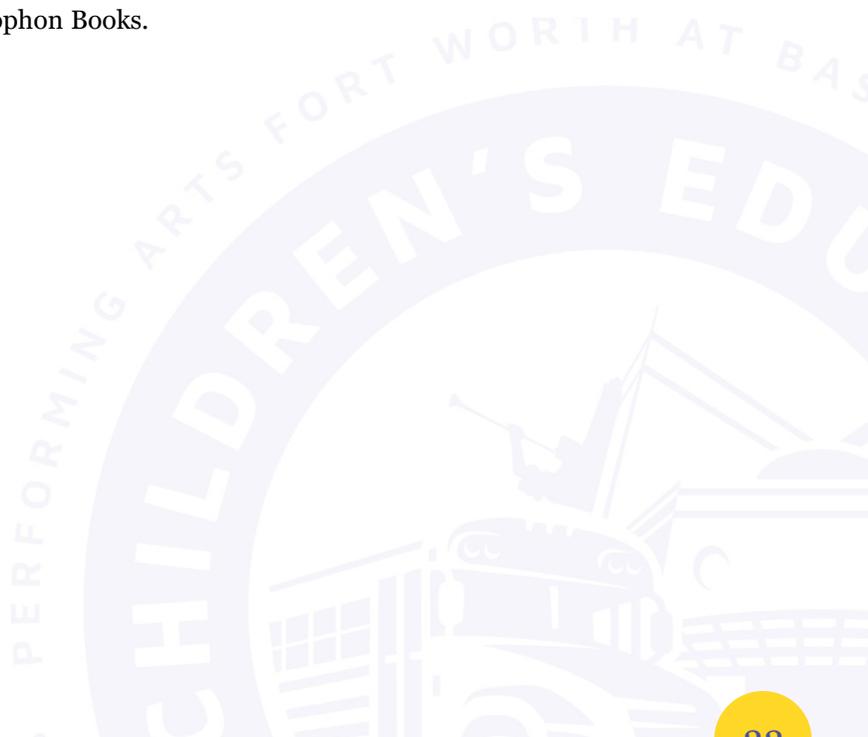


5. Imagine that you are sitting in the front row of the audience at this performance. Draw a picture from your new point of view as an audience member.
6. Now imagine that you are sitting high up in the back of the Upper Gallery. Draw your point of view.

Answers to Degas: An Artist with a Different Point of View

1. The Ballerina
2. The stage
3. C. The side or wings of the stage
4. A. He believed people and things could be looked at from different angles and that even empty spaces could be interesting and beautiful.
B. Curtains, props, dressing rooms, orchestra, audience, dancers waiting in the wings, back of the theatre

From *Coloring Book of Great Composers*, Bellerophon Books.



Ballet Mystery Word Puzzle

Complete the following phrases to discover the **Mystery Word**.

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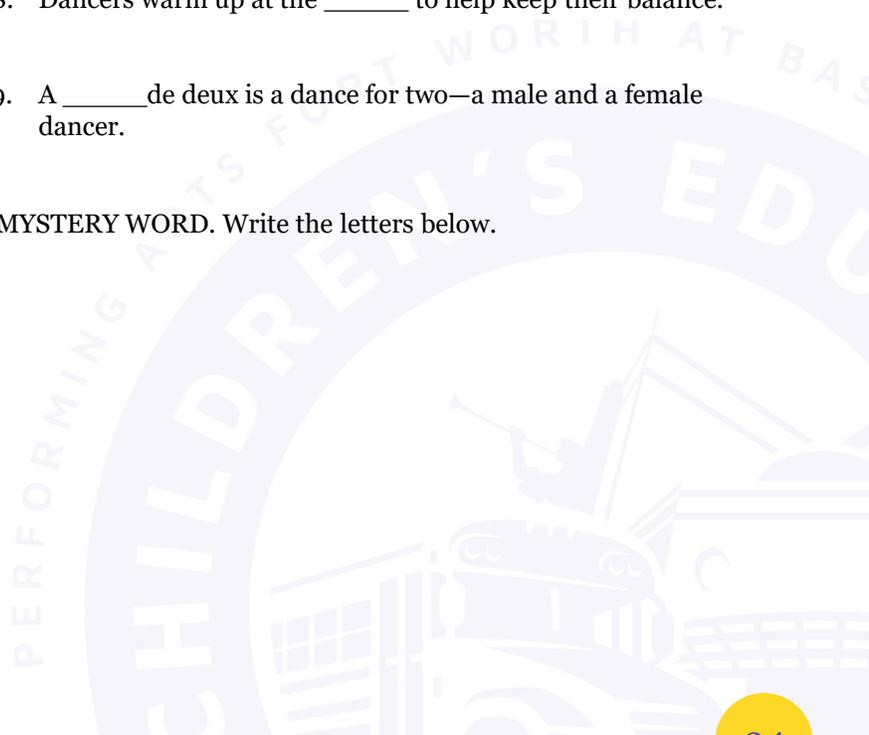
□ □ ○ □

□ □ □ ○ □

□ ○ □

1. On the tips of the toes is called on _____.
2. _____ on the ballet shoes keeps a dancer from slipping.
3. A _____ is the person who makes up the dance.
4. _____ follows the principal dancers on stage to highlight their moves.
5. _____ is how high a dancer jumps or leaps.
6. When one person dances it is called a _____.
7. A dance costume with either a short or long skirt is a _____.
8. Dancers warm up at the _____ to help keep their balance.
9. A _____ de deux is a dance for two—a male and a female dancer.

Now take out the circled letters and discover the MYSTERY WORD. Write the letters below.



Ballet Word Find

Answers: pointe, rosin, choreographer, spotlight, elevation, solo, tutu, barre, pas.
 MYSTERY WORD: **orchestra!**

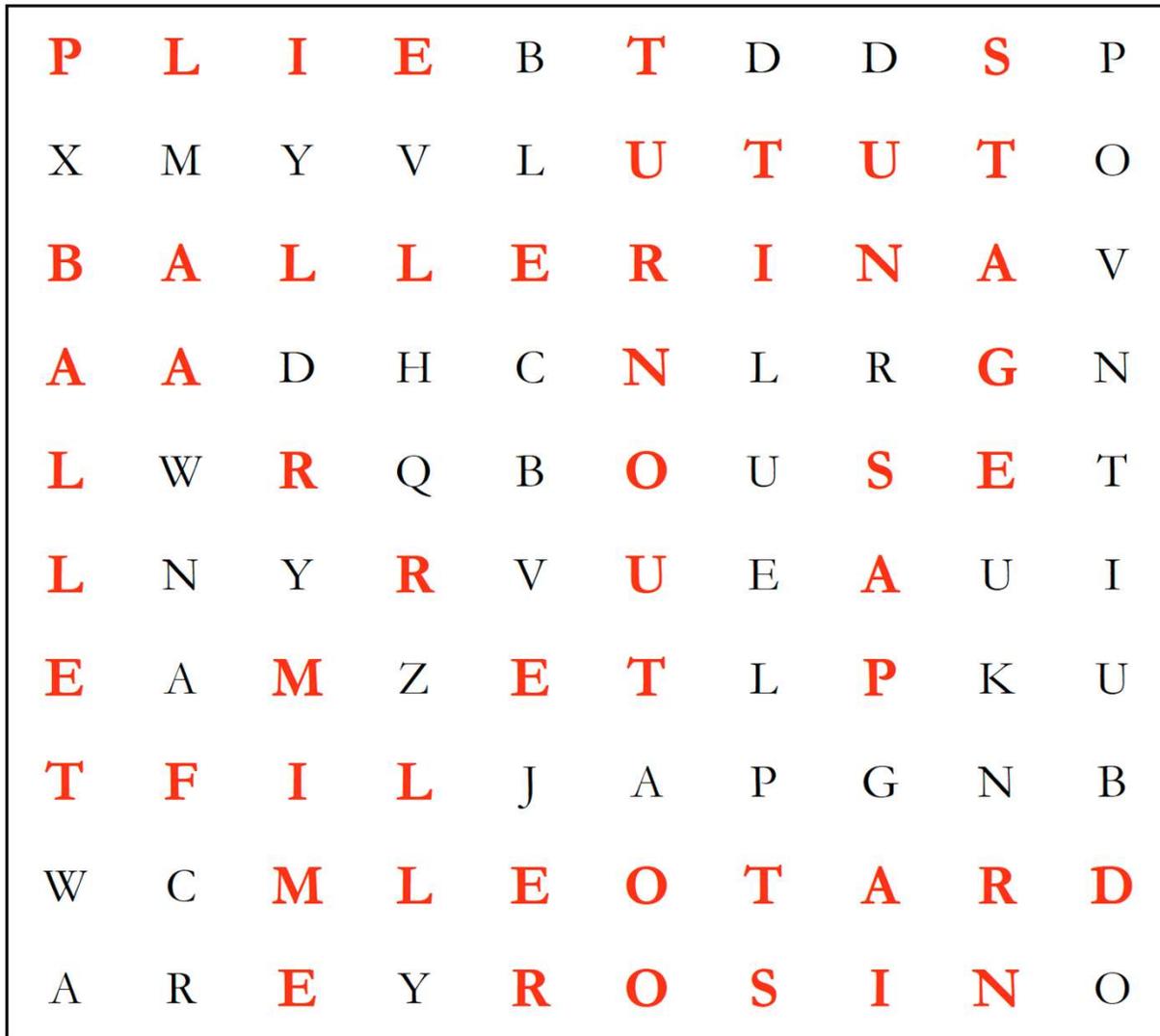
P	L	I	E	B	T	D	D	S	P
X	M	Y	V	L	U	T	U	T	O
B	A	L	L	E	R	I	N	A	V
A	A	D	H	C	N	L	R	G	N
L	W	R	Q	B	O	U	S	E	T
L	N	Y	R	V	U	E	A	U	I
E	A	M	Z	E	T	L	P	K	U
T	F	I	L	J	A	P	G	N	B
W	C	M	L	E	O	T	A	R	D
A	R	E	Y	R	O	S	I	N	O

Ballet Word Find

BALLERINA
 BARRE
 LIFT
 PAS
 ROSIN
 TURNOUT

BALLET
 LEOTARD
 MIME
 PLIE
 STAGE
 TUTU

Answers: pointe, rosin, choreographer, spotlight, elevation, solo, tutu, barre, pas.
 MYSTERY WORD: **orchestra!**



Ballet Word Find Answers

BALLERINA
 BARRE
 LIFT
 PAS
 ROSIN
 TURNOUT

BALLET
 LEOTARD
 MIME
 PLIE
 STAGE
 TUTU

Responding to Dance

Taken from Lincoln Center Institute Guide

When you watch a work of art on the stage, there are many ways that you can respond. Watching a dance can change a person, causing them to see the world in a different way.

Use some of the questions below as your guide after seeing the dance. What other questions could you ask as you go deeper into your memories of what you saw?

DESCRIPTION

- Describe the piece in as much detail as possible. What did you see? What did you hear?
- Did the dancers move as a group, or as individuals? Did they move fast with the fast music? Slow with the slow music?
- Describe the shapes that the dancers made with their bodies. And the way they moved in space.
- What kind of music or sound did you hear?
How did that affect the way the dancers moved?
- What else did the dancers use to tell the story or create the mood?
Lights
Props (things they carried or danced with)
Sets

ANALYSIS

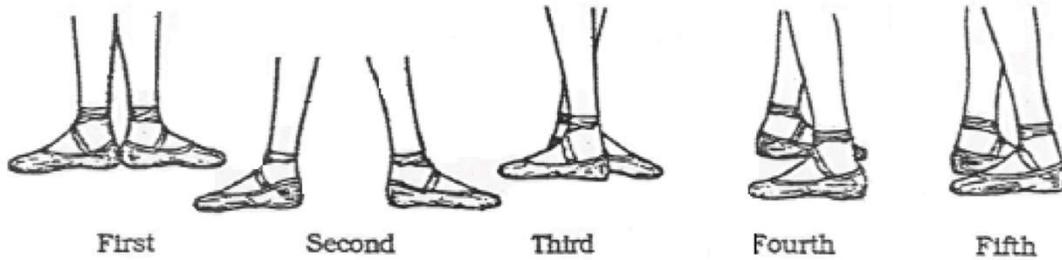
- In what ways did the dancers change their movement through the dance?
Why do you think they did that?
- What shapes or movements did the dancers make and how did it express an idea, a character, or a story? If there were emotions that you felt, what made you feel those emotions? Happy? Sad? Funny? Nervous?
- In what ways did the music help the dancing?

INTERPRETATION

- What ideas was the artist trying to tell you?
- What have you seen in every day life that reminds you of this dance?
- Animals? Characters on television? A leaf blowing in the wind? Other elements of nature? Lightning in the sky?
- If you were to create a dance to the same music, what would yours look like? And, what feeling or story would you try to tell?

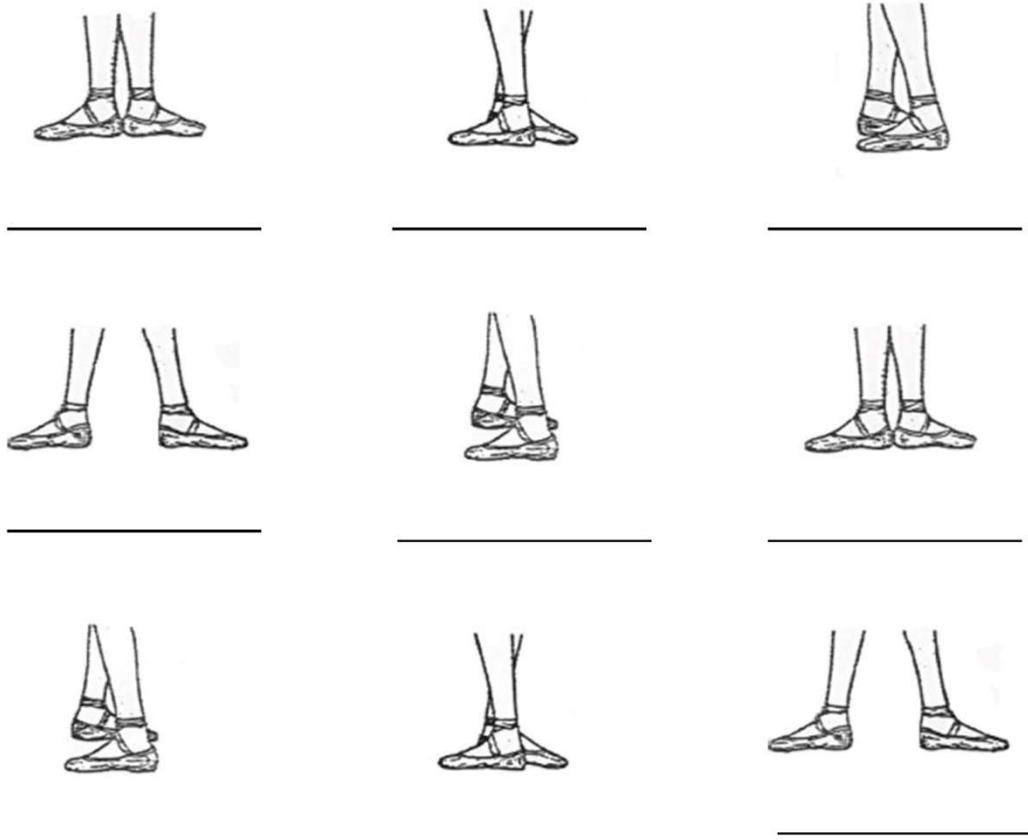
Ballet Foot Positions

These are five ballet foot positions.



Pictures from *Ballet* by Kate Castle

Below the examples, write the number that corresponds to the foot positions.



Nutcracker Word Search

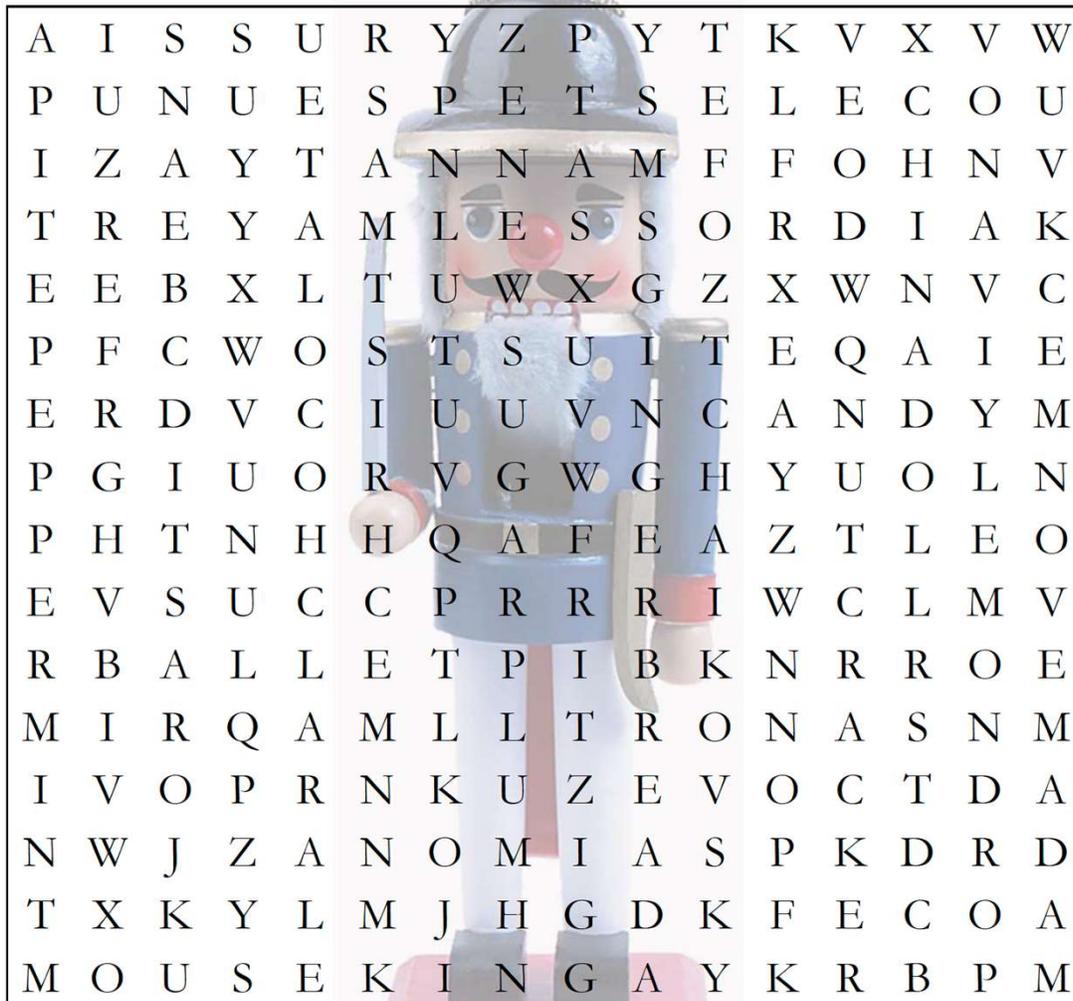
FIND THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

Chocolate
Drosselmayer
suite
candy
Madame von Meck
Petipa

gingerbread
Fritz
Christmas
sugar plum
Ivanov
celeste

Prince
Peppermint
china doll
Nutcracker
Mouse King

Tchaikovsky
ballet
Clara
Hoffman
lemon drop



Picture from www.arcsoft.com/shared/support/hemera/downloads/november/images/nutcracker.jpg

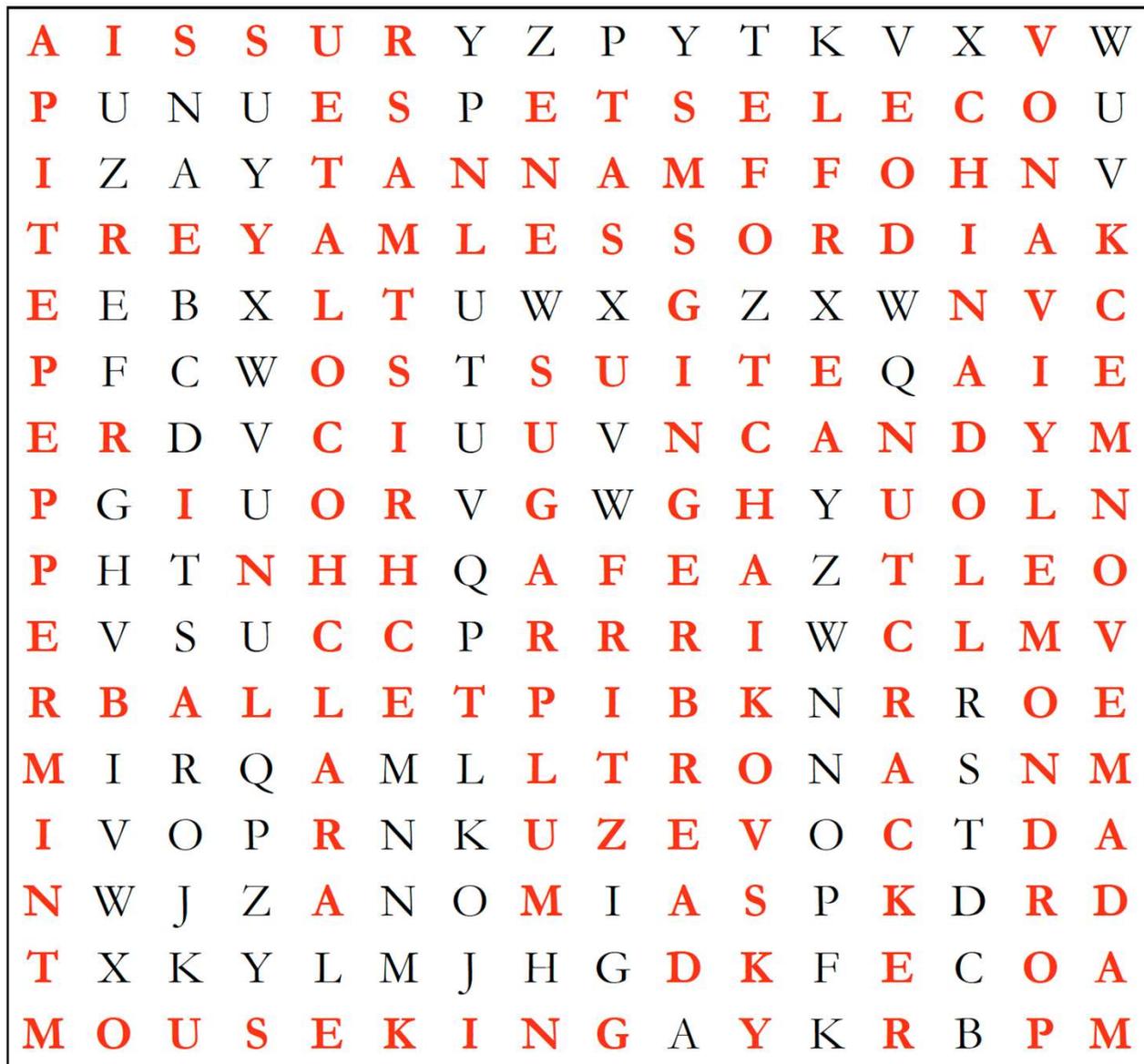
Nutcracker Word Search Key

Chocolate
Drosselmayer
suite
candy
Madame von Meck
Petipa

gingerbread
Fritz
Christmas
sugar plum
Ivanov
celeste

Prince
Peppermint
china doll
Nutcracker
Mouse King

Tchaikovsky
ballet
Clara
Hoffman
lemon drop





Resources

To learn more about The Nutcracker and ballet—

- Anderson, Jack. *A History of Dance*. Newsweek Books, New York, 1974. A well-written overview and history of all kinds of dance for adults.
- Barber, Antonia. *Shoes of Satin, Ribbons of Silk; Tales from the Ballet*. Kingfisher, 1995. A collection of the stories of many ballets.
- Barber, David W. *Tutus, Tights and Tiptoes; Ballet History as It Ought to be Taught*. Sound and Vision, Toronto, 2000. A humorous history of dance for adults.
- Bell, Anthea, adaptation of E.T.A. Hoffmann. *The Nutcracker and the Mouse-King*. Verlag Neugebauer Press, 1982. A beautifully illustrated, long translation of the original story by Hoffmann.
- Castle, Kate. *Ballet*. Kingfisher, 1996. A basic book, well-written for children.
- Castle, Kate. *My Ballet Book*. DK Publishing, 1998. Wonderful general guide on ballet and ballet history with wonderful pictures
- Edom, Helen and Nicola Katrak. *Starting Ballet*. Usborne 1993. For beginners.
- Fiske, Roger. *Ballet Music*. George G. Harrap Company, 1958. Good resource.
- Hague, Michael. *The Nutcracker*. Sea Star Books, San Francisco, 2003. A combination of Hoffmann's tale with elements from the ballet, along with detailed illustrations.
- Hautzig, Deborah, illustrated by Diane Goode. *The Story of the Nutcracker Ballet*. Random House, New York, 1983. A simplified, lovely version of the ballet.
- Hoffmann, E.T.A., translated by Major Alex Ewing, illustrated by Roberto Innocenti. *Nutcracker*. Harcourt Brace and Co. 1996. The long Hoffmann version with detailed, unusual illustrations.
- Hoffmann, E.T.A., translated by Andrea C. Madden, illustrated by Carter Goodrich. *Nutcracker*. Ariel Books, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1987. The long Hoffmann version.
- Hoffmann, E.T.A., translated by Ralph Manheim, illustrated by Maurice Sendak. *Nutcracker*. Crown Publishers, Inc. New York, 1984. The Hoffmann tale with elaborate, imaginative illustrations as only Sendak can do.
- Hollyer, Belinda. *Stories from the Classical Ballet*. Viking, 1995. A wide collection of the stories of the ballets.
- Isadora, Rachel. *Lili at Ballet*. The Putnam and Grosset Group, 1993. Well written

- Isadora, Rachel. *The Nutcracker*, Retold and Illustrated by Rachel Isadora. Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1981. Imaginative illustrations and shortened version of the story.
- Littlesugar, Amy. *Marie in Fourth Position; The Story of Degas' "The Little Dancer"*. Philomel Books, 1996. Well written for children.
- McCaughrean, Geraldine. *The Random House Book of Stories from the Ballet*. Random House, 1994. Collection of stories.
- Rosenberg, Jane. *Dance Me a Story; Twelve Tales from the Classic Ballets*. Thames and Hudson, 1985. Wonderfully written for children.
- Shaw, Ray. *The Nutcracker; The Ballet Retold and Photographed*. Prentice-Hall, 1970.
- Spatt, Leslie E. *Behind the Scenes at the Ballet; Rehearsing and Performing The Sleeping Beauty*. Puffin Books, 1995. Beautiful.
- Switzer, Ellen. *The Nutcracker; A Story and A Ballet*. Atheneum, New York, 1985. A lovely book with many pictures and photographs of the dancers and the production from New York City Ballet Company.
- Tatchell, Judy. *The World of Ballet*. Usborne Publishing, 1994. Introduction.
- Thomas, Annabel. *An Usborne Guide: Ballet and Dance*. Usborne, 1987. Introduction.
- Tichenor, Kay. *Ballet; Color and Story Album*. Troubador Press, 1995. Coloring book.
- Tucker, Maggie. *Zigzag Factfinders: Ballet and Dance*. Smithmark Publishers, 1997. Reference.
- Verdy, Violette. *Swans, Sugarplums and Satin Slippers; Ballet Stories for Children*. Scholastic Inc., 1991. Beautifully written stories.

On the Internet

- www.texasballettheater.org/ Look at “Kid’s Corner”—a must! Wonderful.
- www.KidsDomain.com Find Holiday Fun; The Nutcracker—Story and Music. It has Midi files, Movies of Washington Ballet School and Company performing some of the ballet as well as photos from the ballet.
- www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/exhibits.degas.shtml. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Degas and the Dance.
- www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/shows/degas/guide.html. Multimedia presentation of Degas and the Dance. Wonderful.
- www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/degas/ WebMuseum of Degas
- <http://www.Nutcrackerballet.net/> Good resource. The music, the books, the story.
- www.bethanyroberts.com/Nutcrackerstory.htm. Animated, in color with music and simplified story.



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Angels In The Wings

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