



Curriculum Objectives

Strand Unit: Exploration, creation and performance of dance

- Explore a range of body actions and body shapes.
- Move with an awareness of levels and directions in space.
- Copy a partner's movements.
- Create and perform a partner dance with teacher's guidance.
- Move in space safely with others.
- Develop poise, balance and coordination while moving and stopping.

Strand Unit: Understanding and appreciation of dance

- Continue to develop an awareness of the need for focus and concentration in dance.

Move up a level

Venue

- Hall or quiet outdoor space.

PSSI Homepage

Equipment

- CD player and music.

Reference

- Primary School Curriculum (1999) Physical Education, page 18-19.



ACTIVITY

1 Introduction

Switching on for dance

Sit cross-legged, facing the children who are all spread out in their own spaces. Remind them to **switch on** for dance:

Switch on

- your ears
- your eyes
- your concentration
- your body.

Warm up and stretching: Visit your warm up bank.

2 Lesson theme: Body actions

Stage 1: Exploration of walking

Body actions refer to the ways in which the body can travel or move in the general space surrounding it:

- Walking
- Running
- Hopping
- Skipping
- Jumping
- Turning
- Travelling on the floor.

Begin by exploring the activity of **walking** first. Encourage the children to vary their walking actions by reference to the following:

- Use of body parts to accompany an action (shrugging the shoulders/swinging the arms/twisting the waist while walking).
- Body shape (what shape does your body have while you move?).
- Levels (moving on a low, middle or high level).
- Directions (moving forwards/backwards/sideways).
- Speed (moving fast and slow).

Let's look at how many ways our bodies can move around the hall. Show me how your body can walk. Can you walk very low/high? What shape can you make when you're walking? Can you walk on your heels/ toes? Can you lift your knees up while you're walking? Can you move your elbows while you're walking? Who can walk sideways? Who can walk in a circle? Can you do a funny walk/happy walk/sad walk?

TEACHING POINTS

- Ensure that each child has enough space to be able to move safely and to be able to see you.
- Encourage each child to focus and concentrate as they begin this lesson.
- Choose from Music Selection 1.
- Ensure that all of the children keep a good space bubble as they move. Position yourself at the periphery in order to have a clear view of everyone.
- As you move from one task to the next call *freeze*. This gives the children a moment to rest and it helps them to focus on what you are saying.

ACTIVITY

Stage 2: Exploration of the other body actions

Once you have given the children an overview of walking, guide them through a brief exploration of the other body actions (running, jumping, hopping, skipping, turning and floor work, i.e. moving along the floor) in a similar way, always drawing upon the concepts outlined above to help the children to add variety and contrast to their body actions.

3 Conclusion

(a) Follow-the-leader dance

The follow-the-leader dance is a development of the mirror dance. In this dance the children line up one behind the other, the leader in front and the follower behind. The leader dances around the hall using different body actions, while the follower copies him/her.

Stage 1: Demonstrating the dance

Arrange the children in pairs and number them 1 and 2. Ask the children to watch while you demonstrate a short follow-the-leader dance with one child, drawing attention to the following rules.

For the leaders:

- **Don't go too fast** because your follower has to keep up with you in order to copy you.
- **Take your partner into safe spaces** so that you do not crash into any other dancers.
- **Don't keep looking back** at your partner because you won't be able to see where you're going.
- **Try and make the journey an interesting one** for your partner by using lots of different ways of moving.

For the followers:

- **Keep a close eye on your leader** and do your best to follow her exactly.
- **Try and guess what s/he might do next.**

TEACHING POINTS

- Vary the pace of exploration by encouraging moments of slow relaxed movements to avoid the children becoming over tired.
- It is useful to explore the more vigorous activities such as running and jumping in short stints and intersperse them with walking and/or floor work.
- Introduce this dance by asking the children to recall what they did in the mirror dance, i.e. one dancer had to move and the other dancer was the reflection and had to copy. Now link it to the follow-the-leader dance:
This dance is a bit like the mirror dance because I have a partner and s/he has to copy me. But instead of facing me s/he has to go behind me (demonstrate with child volunteer behind you). I'm the leader and s/he's my follower. Now, instead of staying in my bubble, I can move all around the hall and s/he has to follow me ...

ACTIVITY

Stage 2: Creating the dance

The children stand one behind the other and begin the dance. Guide the activity, calling out the child who is to lead, i.e. **Number 1** or **Number 2**. Give suggestions where necessary:

- *I wonder if the leaders could use different levels when they move.*
- *Some followers are really good at copying their leader's actions.*
- *Some leaders could go a little slower, try and repeat your movements a few times before changing.*
- *I like all the different arm actions I see.*
- *It's No. 2's turn to lead, let's change around ...*

Stage 3: Performing the dance to music

Introduce music while the children continue to dance.

(b) Cool down activity

Ask the children to line up with their partners. Lead the train once around the hall at walking pace, using gentle movements to stretch the arms and upper body. Stand still to finish and lift and lower the arms while inhaling and exhaling quietly.

TEACHING POINTS

- As the children become more familiar with the activity, you will be able to talk less and allow them to find their own ways of moving. You will, however, need to continue calling No. 1 or No. 2 to ensure that each child gets a fair amount of leading and copying.
- Try to move about the periphery of the hall so that you can observe all of the children, and encourage those who may need a little more assistance in the initial stages of this activity.
- Emphasise the link between good concentration and good copying.
- If you have an uneven number of children you will have to have one group of three, one leader and two followers (one behind the other). Choose this group carefully as it can be very challenging for some children to lead two others.
- Choose from Music Selection 2.
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- Visit your stretching bank.
- Encourage the children to use this time to relax and to refocus as they get ready to return to the classroom.

DEVELOPMENT

Further development for Senior Infants, or if repeating this lesson with Junior Infants:

Keeping the partners together, divide the children in two. One half sits down to watch the other half perform the follow-the-leader dance.

- Encourage the children to watch one pair of dancers closely and to see if the leader uses interesting body actions when s/he moves and if his/her follower is able to copy the movements accurately.