



Move up a level

PSSI Homepage

Curriculum Objectives

Venue

Equipment

Reference

Strand Unit: Exploration, creation and performance of dance

- Explore pathways in space.
- Move showing a range of body actions and with awareness of levels and directions.
- Create and perform a dance with a clear beginning, middle and end.
- Move in space safely with others.
- Develop increased 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.
- Watch the dance of others with courtesy and respect.
- Give positive feedback on the dances viewed.
- Hall or quiet outdoor space.
- CD player and music.
- Primary School Curriculum (1999) Physical Education, page 40-41.



ACTIVITY

1 Introduction**Switching on for dance**

Stand 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: Tracing pathways through space**Stage 1: Discussion of spatial pathways**

Sit with the children and discuss the following concepts of spatial awareness:

- Personal space**
The space immediately surrounding the body, i.e. the **space bubble**.
- General space**
The space beyond our bodies, i.e. the space we have to share with others as we move about the hall.
- Pathways**
Remind the children that this is one of the **flavourings** of dance discussed last week, i.e. we travel in different pathways as we move through the general space around us. These pathways can be straight, curved or zigzag.

Stage 2: Exploring floor pathways

Guide the children through an exploration of the ways in which the body can use straight pathways to move through space:

Let's all begin standing in a space. Now focus your eyes on an object at the edge of the room. It can be the bench at the end of the hall, the window or a poster on the wall. Now I want you to use a straight pathway to move to that object. Go!

How are you moving along your pathway, are you walking, hopping or moving on the floor? What part of your body is making the pathway, are you on your seat/side/back? What are you doing with the rest of your body?

Now change and face a different object and get ready to make another pathway towards that object.

Off you go ...

Now you decide when you want to change and continue moving through the hall using different straight pathways to help you to move about while I watch. I really want you to see how many different body actions you use as you make your pathways and what speed, level and direction you use ...

TEACHING POINTS

- Ensure that each child has enough space to be able to move safely and to be able to see you.
- Remind the children to sit correctly to ensure correct alignment of the spine.
- Choose from Music Selection 1.
- Keep the discussion brief in order to get the children up and moving again.
- Draw some simple illustrations of straight and curved pathways on a backboard or chart page.
- Ensure that all of the children move with a good **space bubble** around them and point out to them that when their pathway crosses with that of another dancer, they can either stop and let that dancer pass by or they can change to another pathway and so avoid collision.
- Depending on the space available, and the number of children, it may be necessary to divide them into two groups for this activity, with one observing while the other participates.
- Challenge the children to move with awareness of the different body parts and body actions they can use when making the pathways and with a varied use of levels, directions and speed.
- As the children become more confident with the activity, let them work more independently of you.

ACTIVITY

Now introduce the use of curved pathways into the spatial explorations:

Let's leave the straight pathways to one side for the moment and explore how our bodies can follow curved pathways through space ...

Introduce music and ask the children to move freely using both curved and straight pathways as they travel through the space.

3 Conclusion

(a) The name dance

The children create a short dance showing the pathways created when tracing the letters of their name on the floor.

Stage 1: Demonstrating the dance

Ask the children to sit in a space where they can see you as you give a brief demonstration of the task involved in this dance:

Imagine that the body is like the pencil that writes each letter. I'm going to make a dance by tracing the letters in my name.

For example: **P a t r i c i c a** (Write the name on a black board/chart paper.)

My name has both curves and straight lines.

*I begin in a standing shape and walk forward in a straight pathway with my arms stretched above my head. Now I skip in a curved pathway to the right and my hands are held behind my back. This traces out the pathway of the first letter of my name, i.e. **P**.*

Now I am going to jump to the right in order to move into a new space and begin tracing the next letter of my name, just as a pencil would move to the next space on a page to write the next letter. I think I'm going to trace this letter using an action on the floor.

Continue with this procedure until you have traced your name on the floor.

TEACHING POINTS

- As for above, but now emphasise the challenges of moving in a curved rather than a straight pathway.
- Draw the children's attention to the fact that in a straight pathway the body is generally upright and controlled in its movements, but in a curved pathway the body can move from side to side and the action becomes more flowing, but can also become a little less controlled.
- Choose from Music Selection 2.
- Although you may wish to comment occasionally during this activity, it is useful to use this opportunity to observe the children and assess their understanding of the theme as evident in the ways in which they move.
- Encourage the children to watch the demonstration closely.
- Emphasise to the children that it is important to use different body parts as the **pencil** and different body actions, levels and directions as they trace out the name. You may ask for their suggestions as you trace out your name.

ACTIVITY

Stage 2: Creating the dance

The children now create their name dance using the following outline:

Starting shape – then trace the pathway of each letter – then freeze in a finishing shape.

Introduce music and ask the children to perform their dances to the music, holding still in the finishing position until the music fades out.

Stage 3: Performing the dance

Arrange the children in pairs. **Number 1** sits down and watches while **Number 2** performs his/her dance to the music. Reverse roles.

(b) Cool down activity

Ask the children to stand in their own space, facing you. Lead them through stretches for the arms, legs and torso.

Conclude with everyone standing still, palms pressed together in a prayer gesture. Inhale and lift the arms up to open above the head, and exhale and let both arms fall gently to the side of the body.

TEACHING POINTS

- You will need to help individual children, perhaps by giving them a starting action or reminding them to use different levels, directions or body actions in their dance.
- It is important that you continue to keep an eye on the overall group of children. Sometimes you will need to make a general comment for everyone, such as: *Have you finished your first letter? Remember to use a different body action each time you start to trace a new letter. I'd like to see more use of contrasting levels, high and low, or middle and high ...*
- It is also important to encourage the children to link the pathways of each letter to the next one so that the overall dance flows smoothly from start to finish.
- Remind the children that some dances will be longer (or shorter) than others since the number of letters will vary from name to name, and some dancers may have very slow or fast moments in their dance.
- Choose from Music Selection 2.
- Encourage the audience members to give positive feedback to the dancer(s) they observe.
- Choose from Music Selection 2.
- 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 Fourth Class, or if repeating this lesson with Third Class:

The children work with their partner to join the two name dances together, i.e. dancer **Number 1** teaches his/her dance to **Number 2** and vice versa. Then the two dancers perform the two separate solo dances as one partner dance.

****When back in the classroom, read and discuss the story of Noah's Ark in preparation for next week's lesson.**

If this story is not suitable for use in your school situation replace it with another story and follow the guidelines suggested for using the story when creating a dance.