



Nutcracker

Curriculum Packet

Grades 3-5

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Warmup Activity - The Brain Dance (Created by Anne Green Gilbert)

We recommend using this warm-up activity at the top of each class. For more information on the history of the Brain Dance and how the established pattern can benefit your students visit: <https://www.creativedance.org/about/braindance/>

NOTE TO TEACHERS: *This warm-up provide a transition into your dance/movement class and its pattern can be used to explore new concepts each day. For example, with younger grade levels, the Brain Dance can be used to review patterns, levels (high, middle, low), and tempo (fast or slow movement). In the older grades, Brain Dance can challenge students to consider more complex movement ideas (the difference between how different characters might choose to move and where in the body a movement originates).*

BREATH: Focus on the inhale and exhale of breath from the diaphragm (the students should be able to feel their stomach moving in and out). Can they breathe in such a way that they feel the breath move through their entire body?

TACTILE: The goal of this section is stimulating touch throughout the body. Consider movements such as tap, brush, or squeeze to guide students through stimulating their entire body head to toe.

CORE-DISTAL: This section moves students from a tight core position (consider the fetal position with all limbs as close to the abdomen as possible) to a full “distal” position, with limbs stretched out and as far away from one another as possible.

HEAD-TAIL: For this section of the pattern, consider the “Cow/Cat” sequence in yoga. The goal is to move the head and tail toward one another, then away from one another. This can be done standing (simply curling the neck down and then up) or in a crawling position (arching the back like a cat, then stretching the opposite way in “cow” pose)

UPPER-LOWER: Ask students to freeze one section of their body (either the waist and up or the waist and below) and provide direction in moving the opposite section. Consider providing them descriptive words (move your upper body smoothly, like a robot, as if you’re moving through molasses). Then switch to the opposite section of the body and do the same.

BODY SIDE: Similar to upper-lower, this section works on splitting the body down the center from top to bottom. Freeze the right side, and direct students in moving the left. Then switch. Ensure movement doesn’t cross that imaginary center-line.

CROSS LATERAL: This section can be approached in several ways – the goal is to work on opposition movement (the way that your opposite arm swings forward when you take a step). Exaggerated walking or marching is one way to approach this – for example, when they mark on their right foot their left arm should swing forward and so forth. Another way is to simply stand in place and take the right arm across the body to the left knee and then the left arm to the right knee.

VESTIBULAR: The final section of the pattern asks students to work on their balance and equilibrium. First, ask students to get a little bit dizzy (either by shaking their head back and forth or even spinning in circles) – then they should freeze in place or, if you’re feeling a challenge, even balance in their freeze!

<p>K</p> <p>What do you <u>K</u>now about the topic already?</p>	<p>W</p> <p>What do you <u>W</u>ant to know about the topic? What questions do you have?</p>	<p>L</p> <p>What have you <u>L</u>earned about the topic?</p>

Cool Down and Reflection Activities

ALL GRADE LEVELS - Roll Out: Ask students to move to a space in the classroom where they can stand. Going through each part of their body, from their head down to their toes, ask them to roll each part for 8 counts. Feel free to use the following breakdown of body parts to guide the roll out:

- **Head:** Roll your head back and forth from shoulder to shoulder, with your chin tucked down to your chest
- **Shoulders:** Roll your shoulders back and then forward
- **Arms:** Circle your arms big to roll them out
- **Wrists:** Roll your wrists as if you're stirring something
- **Hips:** Roll your hips in a circle as though you're hula hooping
- **Knees:** Put your knees together and bend them. Carefully draw circles with your knees
- **Ankles:** One at a time, roll each ankle for 8 counts.

FOR K-5TH GRADE - Flower and Candle: This cool down is great for centering younger students. Ask the class to sit in a neutral position, either at their desk or on the floor. Have them imagine that they see a flower in front of them, and ask them to pick that flower out of the ground. Ask them to envision what color it is and what it smells like. Then have them take a big sniff of the flower, inhaling through their nose. Now ask the students to look to their other side and picture a beautiful candle. Ask them to picture the color of the candle and size of the flame. Now ask them to blow out the candle with a gentle exhale. Continue three or four times asking students to sniff their flower then blow out their candle, moving them into a cyclical breath meditation.

FOR 6-12TH GRADE - A Class Breath: Stand in a circle with students. Ask them to place their hands on their abdomen and take a deep breath from their diaphragm (belly). They should be able to feel their belly move in and out. Now ask them to close their eyes, if they're comfortable doing so, and as you reflect on each section of the class ask them to take one deep breath in and out as a class. It should look something like this:

INSTRUCTOR: Think back to our warm up today. We focused on working as a team. Breathe in and think about how you felt being a part of a team. Breathe in by the time I count to 5: 1,2,3,4,5. Now exhale and release any stress or frustration that this part of class might have brought to you. (Class exhales)

ALL GRADE LEVELS - Journal Time: Whether your students are able to write full sentences or simply draw, journaling provides a great opportunity for individual reflection and processing at the end of a full class. Provide your students 10 minutes to freely journal in response to the class. Provide an open structure: They can write or draw anything as long as it is about what you have done that day in class. Perhaps they spend the entire time writing about the warm-up or reflecting on how the members of their group worked together. Both are equally productive! This works best if it is clear to students that they will not be graded on what they write. Grades can come from other class activities.

Online Resources

Introduction to the Show (For all grade levels)

- *This video is an overview of Christopher Wheeldon's Nutcracker at the Joffrey Ballet - the show that they will be seeing!*

WTTW - "Making a New American Nutcracker"

- This site features a photo gallery, featured stories, video clips and the full documentary "Making a New American Nutcracker."

Music for Activities (For all grade levels)

YouTube Playlist

Spotify Playlist

- *You can find the music of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker can be found on You Tube and Spotify. We recommend these sources to find music for the activities outlined in your curriculum packet, or even to play in the background during work and reflection time.*

Overview of the Original Nutcracker Story (Best for Grades K-5)

This clip provides an overview of the original Nutcracker story. While this is not the exact story seen on stage in Wheeldon's production, it provides a basis for students to become familiar with the basic idea of the story.

History of the Nutcracker Ballet (Best for Grades 6-12)

Resources on basics and history of Ballet

- Information on the [origins of Ballet](#) as an art form, for Grades 3-12
- [Day in the Life of a Ballerina](#), for Grades 3-12
- [The History of Ballet at Dance Tutors](#), a good resource for teachers of all grades
- [Origins of Ballet at History World](#) a good resource for teachers of all grades

Chicago Architecture – At the time of the 1893 World's Fair and Today



Auditorium Theatre Building (Today and 1889)

Chicago Architecture – At the time of the 1893 World’s Fair and Today



Home Insurance Building (1893/Today)

Chicago Architecture – At the time of the 1893 World's Fair and Today



Old St. Patrick's Church (1893 and Today)

Chicago Architecture – At the time of the 1893 World's Fair and Today



The Art Institute (1893/Today)

Nutcracker Investigation and Music Video (Grades 3-5)

Assignment Overview

THE ASSIGNMENT

This production of *The Nutcracker* is very specifically set in Chicago during the World's Fair. Setting the story set in our city during this specific time provides the audience with a new and different look at the traditional Nutcracker but also means that in-depth research was needed on the time period and what Chicago was like during that time. Over the next few classes, we will be stepping into the shoes of the artists, investigating the historical aspects of the show's setting and creating a music video that shares what we've learned.

YOUR INVESTIGATION TEAM

With your team, you will be assigned a specific part of the history connecting to the Nutcracker to investigate. Your mission will be to learn as much as you can about this part of the history, and share it with the class in a music video!

STEP ONE: Know the topic your group will explore:

- 1) The Architecture of Chicago
 - Who were the major architects in Chicago in 1893?
 - What buildings were in Chicago in 1893?
 - What buildings were constructed specifically for the World's Fair?
 - What is unique about the architecture of these buildings?
- 2) What Else Was Happening in Chicago?
 - What other events took place in Chicago between 1892 and 1893?
 - Who was mayor of the city at the time of the World's Fair?
 - What were the major industries in Chicago at the time?
 - What were the major forms of entertainment? Where did people go for entertainment?
- 3) The Architecture of The World's Fair
 - Who were the major architects of the 1893 World's Fair?
 - Where was the World's Fair located in the city? What is in this area now?
 - Are any of the things built for the Fair still standing?
 - What was unique about the architecture of these buildings? What specific things did they need to be used for?

MY GROUP WILL BE INVESTIGATING TOPIC #_____.

Nutcracker Investigation and Music Video (Grades 3-5)

Assignment Overview

STEP 2: Create a research plan

Now that you know your topic, use the Research Plan page of this packet to figure out who in your group will investigate each specific question. This person is responsible for using the library and online research to learn the answer(s) to their question and share it with the group. Be sure every person in your group knows what they're investigating!

STEP 3: Do the research!

Before a choreographer, set designer, or costume designer starts to create for a ballet, they do the research. This is the time to learn as much as you possibly can about the question you are investigating. If we were creating a ballet, this information would be used to inform what the scenery, costumes, and movement looked like and to make sure you were accurately telling the story. For your project, this information will be used to inform your music video, in which you will select a song, images, and movement to share what you've learned with the rest of the class. Be sure to cite all of your sources!

STEP 4: Create your storyboard

Once your group has completed their investigation, sit down as a team and share what you've each learned. Then use the Storyboard Template in this packet to plan out how you will share this information in a music video. Ask yourselves:

- What is the most important information you've learned? (You'll want to ensure this is included!)
- In what order do you want to share this information so it makes sense to the audience?
- Is there any information missing or questions your group still has? (If so, you can still go find the answer!)

STEP 5: Prepare and rehearse

Once you have created your storyboard, gather the materials you will need to create your music video. Be prepared with:

- The song you've chosen to use (be sure it's school appropriate!)
- Any photos/visual images you'll be using.
- Any costume pieces you'll be using.

Then it is time to rehearse! This means to practice what you will eventually film for your music video. Be sure that you take time to:

- Plan any dance or movement you're including and teach it to everyone in your group who will participate.
- Plan when you need each of your visual elements and who will get them.
- Practice running through your entire music video several times so you're ready to film!

STEP 6: Film the Video!

Nutcracker Investigation and Music Video (Grades 3-5)

Assignment Overview

RESEARCH PLAN

Group Topic: _____

Who is investigating what?

Look at the questions listed under your topic in the assignment packet. Each group member should choose at least one question to investigate. Choose the questions you're most interested in. Write them and who will investigate each of them below.

Question 1: _____

Investigated by: _____

Question 2: _____

Investigated by: _____

Question 3: _____

Investigated by: _____

Question 4: _____

Investigated by: _____

Research should be completed by this date: _____

Nutcracker Investigation and Music Video (Grades 3-5)

Assignment Overview

MUSIC VIDEO STORY BOARD

Group Topic: _____

Group Members Names: _____

Song Being Used: _____

Visuals/Props/ Materials Needed

Be sure to list any costume pieces, photos/visuals, or materials needed for your video. It might help to do this step **last** once you've already planned your video.

Use the pages that follow to plan your video scene by scene!

Nutcracker Investigation and Music Video (Grades 3-5)

Assignment Overview

BEGINNING OF VIDEO/SCENE ONE

Things to think about: How do you let your audience know the topic of this music video? Remember it should be told through a visual image or movement; talking will be hard to understand over the song.

What happens on the screen? What do we see?

Who is in this scene? What is each person doing?

What materials do you need to have ready to accomplish this?

What movement will happen? Describe it so you can remember it from one rehearsal to the next.

Nutcracker Investigation and Music Video (Grades 3-5)

Assignment Overview

ANSWER TO FIRST QUESTION/SCENE TWO

What happens on the screen? What do we see?

Who is in this scene? What is each person doing?

What materials do you need to have ready to accomplish this?

What movement will happen? Describe it so you can remember it from one rehearsal to the next.

Nutcracker Investigation and Music Video (Grades 3-5)

Assignment Overview

ANSWER TO SECOND QUESTION/SCENE THREE

What happens on the screen? What do we see?

Who is in this scene? What is each person doing?

What materials do you need to have ready to accomplish this?

What movement will happen? Describe it so you can remember it from one rehearsal to the next.

Nutcracker Investigation and Music Video (Grades 3-5)

Assignment Overview

ANSWER TO THIRD QUESTION/SCENE FOUR

What happens on the screen? What do we see?

Who is in this scene? What is each person doing?

What materials do you need to have ready to accomplish this?

What movement will happen? Describe it so you can remember it from one rehearsal to the next.

Nutcracker Investigation and Music Video (Grades 3-5)

Assignment Overview

ANSWER TO FOURTH QUESTION/SCENE FIVE

What happens on the screen? What do we see?

Who is in this scene? What is each person doing?

What materials do you need to have ready to accomplish this?

What movement will happen? Describe it so you can remember it from one rehearsal to the next.

Nutcracker Investigation and Music Video (Grades 3-5)

Assignment Overview

CONCLUSION/SCENE SIX

Things to think about: How do you let your audience know that this is the end? Does your song fade out or stop abruptly? What is the last thing you want the audience to see?

What happens on the screen? What do we see?

Who is in this scene? What is each person doing?

What materials do you need to have ready to accomplish this?

What movement will happen? Describe it so you can remember it from one rehearsal to the next.

Music Video Instructor Assessment

	Exemplary	Proficient	Room to Grow
Research Plan Completion	The team's research plan is complete, with appropriate details present to support answers to each question.	The team's research plan is complete, but lacks detail.	The team's research plan is incomplete.
Storyboard Completion	The team's storyboard template is complete including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Answers to all 4 major questions appear in the final project. 2) There is a clear order to the information shared. 3) A specific song was selected that relates to our topic. 	The team's storyboard template is lacking one of the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Answers to all 4 major questions appear in the final project. 2) There is a clear order to the information shared. 3) A specific song was selected that relates to our topic. 	The team's storyboard template is missing two or more of the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Answers to all 4 major questions appear in the final project. 2) There is a clear order to the information shared. 3) A specific song was selected that relates to our topic.
Rehearsal Participation and Focus	Team members actively participated in all rehearsal time, remaining focused, supportive, and encouraging.	Team members participated in most of the rehearsal time, but were sometimes off task or unsupportive.	Team members did not participate productively in rehearsal time.
Preparedness to Film	Team had all materials prepared, had rehearsed, and was ready to film by the deadline.	Team could have been better prepared to film by the deadline (some materials were missing or they did not rehearse enough)	Team was unprepared to film by the deadline.
Does your video answer the 4 major questions asked in the topic prompt?	Final video clearly answered all 4 major questions in prompt.	Final video only answered 3 of the 4 questions in prompt.	Final video answered 2 or fewer of the questions listed in prompt.