

JOFFREY ★ BALLET

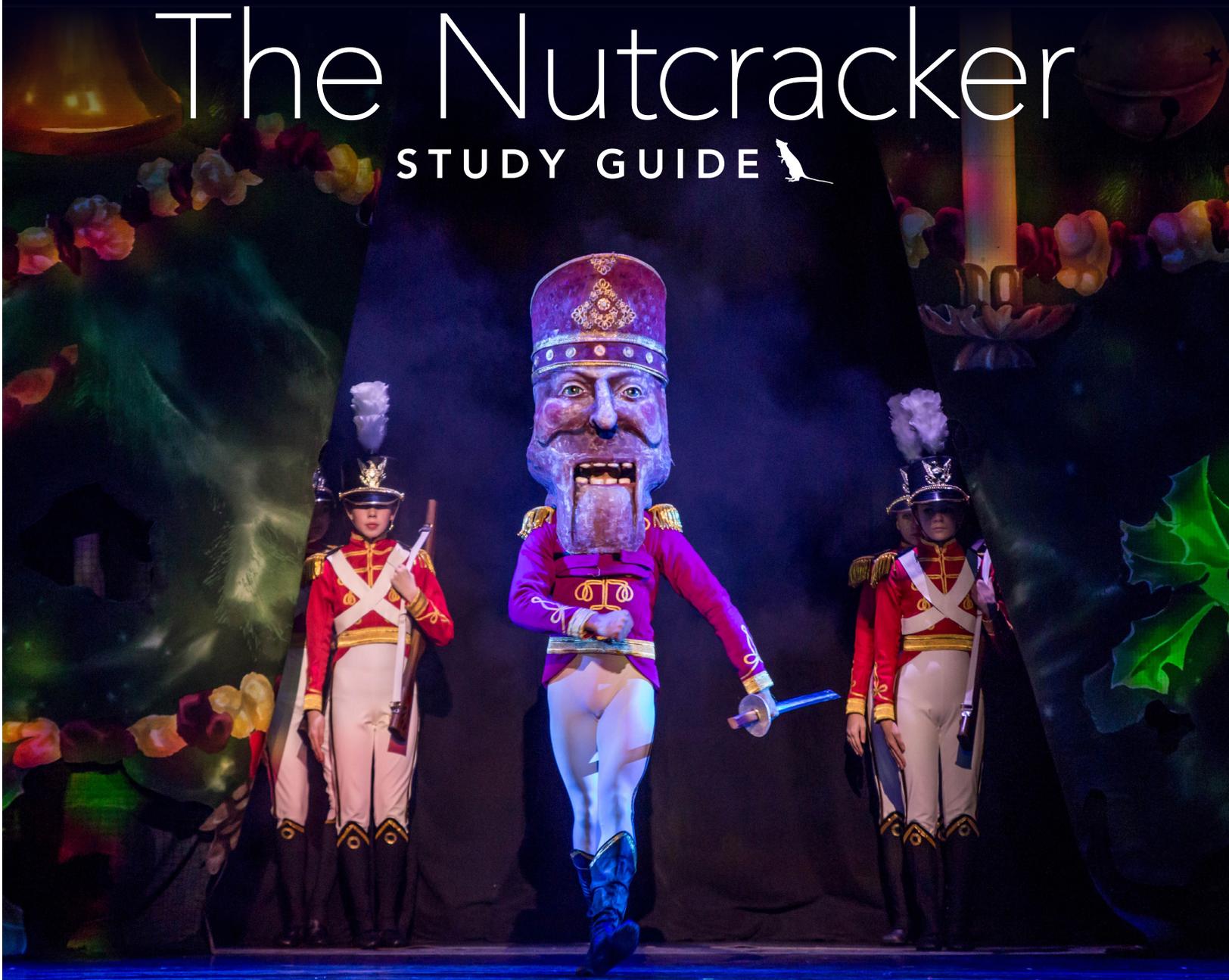
CHICAGO

ASHLEY WHEATER MBE
THE MARY B. GALVIN
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

GREG CAMERON
PRESIDENT
AND CEO

The Nutcracker

STUDY GUIDE 



GRADES 6-8



JOFFREY BALLET CHICAGO
**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

EXCITE | EXPLORE | ENRICH

10 EAST RANDOLPH STREET | CHICAGO, IL 60601

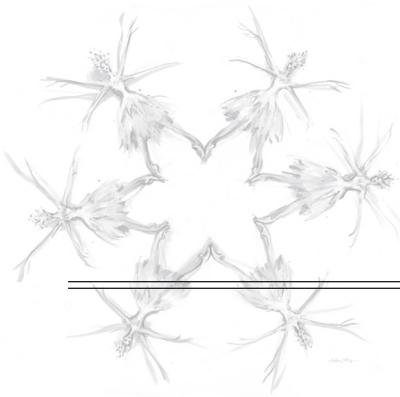
INVESTIGATING THE PROCESS

Original Art: Visual presentation of artistic process perspective

Essential Question: How do the diverse members of an artistic team bring their unique skill sets together to tell a story through ballet performance?

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate skill in “thinking creatively” through problem solving and collaboration with peers to create an original piece of art reflecting their learning (writing, visual art, movement piece).
- Define “ballet” as an art form, as well as basic dance concepts (level, direction, size, shape, etc.).
- Explain the plot of this Nutcracker and identify the elements which make it unique to Chicago.
- Identify key characters in the production.
- Identify key roles on the creative team of Nutcracker.
- Explain the various ways technical elements of the show (lights, sound, set) serve the storytelling, citing specific examples from the work.
- Describe the process Christopher Wheeldon used to move from written story to a ballet production, comparing and contrasting the two works.
- Detail the artistic process from a specific perspective (dancer, scene designer, costume designer) citing examples from the work and describing that process in relation to this production of Nutcracker.
- Discuss how the various artists involved in a production collaborate for a successful final performance, citing specific examples from the Nutcracker and student research on artistic process.



CONNECTING STANDARDS

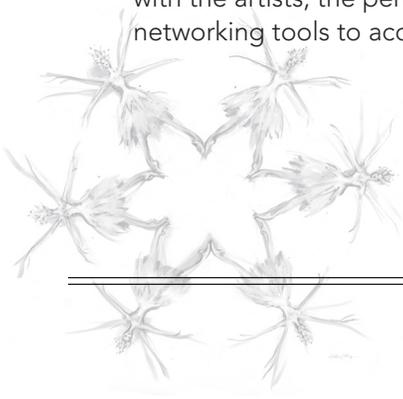
NATIONAL CORE DANCE ANCHOR STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- **Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.**
 - Essential Question: Where do choreographers get ideas for dances?
- **Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.**
 - Essential Question: How is a dance understood?
- **Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work**
 - Essential Question: How is dance interpreted?
- **Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.**
 - Essential Question: How does dance deepen our understanding of ourselves, other knowledge, and events around us?

P21 PARTNERSHIP FOR 21ST LEARNING SKILLS:

Key Elements of P21, as seen in *Nutcracker* Curriculum (based on Joffrey's goal that all programs embody "Thinking Creatively") seen below

- **Learning and Innovation Skills: A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration**
 - Think creatively
 - Work creatively with others
 - Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution
 - Critical thinking/Problem solving
 - **Systems thinking:** Through the analysis of the performance video from various aspects, students are working to analyze how parts of a whole interact to produce overall outcomes in complex systems
 - **Communicate clearly:** In their exploration and creation of unique works of art, students are working to articulate thoughts and ideas effectively in a variety of forms and contexts. They must listen effectively to original source material (work of art) and their research in order to decipher meaning and intention and will investigate various aspects of the work of art via multiple forms of media.
 - **Collaborate with others:** Group work is included at every level of the work, challenging students to work effectively and respectfully with teams and make compromises to reach a common goal.
- **Information, Media and Technology Skills**
 - **Information literacy:** Through the investigative portion of the curriculum, students at all levels are asked to access information efficiently and effectively to support their work, and to manage the information so it is accurately used to solve the problem at hand.
 - **Apply technology effectively:** Using technology as a tool to not only research but to connect with the artists, the performance, and the process, using digital technologies as communication/networking tools to access, manage, evaluate, and create information.





- **Life and Career Skills**

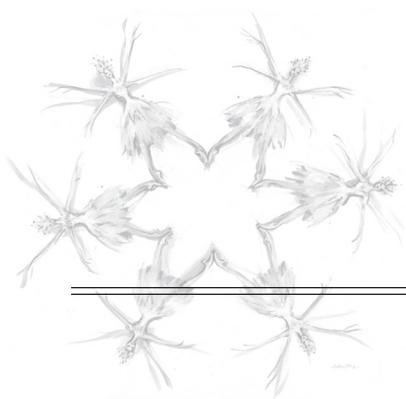
- **Be flexible:** Incorporate feedback effectively, dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism. Understand and negotiate diverse views to reach workable solutions.
- **Manage goals and time:** The small group work of all upper-level grade curriculums challenges students to set goals, balance short and long-term goals, and manage their time effectively to achieve the best outcome.
- **Be self-directed learners:** All programming challenges students to explore and expand their own learning in the connected areas both through the performance video and curriculum activities, as well as their small group work.
- **Interact effectively with others:** Through the small group work students will know when it is appropriate to listen and to speak, and to conduct themselves in a professional manner.
- **Leadership and responsibility:** Small group work and art-creation guide students in using interpersonal and problem-solving skills to influence and guide team members toward goal. By studying the artistic team and process, students see clear examples of leadership and the ability of team members to inspire using example and selflessness.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS

The activities and skills put to work in this curriculum also connect students with various social emotional learning skills. In order to accomplish the goals set forth by activities and exploration-based tasks included in the lessons, students will be asked to:

- Identify and manage their own emotions and behavior
- Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others
- Recognize personal strengths and external supports
- Demonstrate skill related to achieving personal, group, and academic goals
- Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others
- Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with the task at hand when collaborating with a group

Note for Educators: *The curriculum that follows is set in an 8-class format, assuming approximately one hour per class. With the understanding that every school and classroom is unique, we encourage you to spend time with this curriculum prior to bringing it into your classroom and adapt it as necessary for your students' abilities and needs. Perhaps you stretch the lessons over 10–12 classes! An asterisk (*) indicates that the resource is provided in your accompanying curriculum packet.*



CLASS 1: INTRODUCING THE STORY & ART FORM



WARM-UP* — 10 Minutes

(included in your curriculum packet)

Note for Educators: All artists, from dancers to actors to musicians, take time before they begin creating or rehearsing to warm up. Warm ups serve two purposes:

First, they allow artists to prepare the tools they will use for the creation or rehearsal process (which, for dancers and choreographers, is the body and the mind). Secondly, they provide a clear ritual that allows the artist to separate from other concerns, challenges, and tasks of the day in order to fully focus on the work at hand. Start each residency class with one of the warm ups found in the provided warm up glossary in the curriculum packet — you can select the one that works best for your students on any given day to provide the class a chance to prepare their bodies and minds for the work, and also to separate your creation and dance time from the rest of your school day. Each warmup takes approximately 10 minutes.

*KWL CHART: BALLET/THE NUTCRACKER

(included in your curriculum packet)

BALLET — 20 Minutes

Note for Educators: Before you kick off your Nutcracker journey, take some time to see what your students already know about ballet, and discover what questions they have. This allows you to build on your students' prior knowledge, and to correct any misconceptions they might have about ballet before moving forward.

- **Ballet Think/Pair:** Ask students to take 1–2 minutes to silently think about what ballet is. Then have them turn and share the answers to the following questions with a partner:
 - Where have you seen or heard about ballet before?
 - What images pop into your mind when you hear the word ballet?
 - Do you know anyone that does ballet?
 - Have you ever seen ballet or done ballet yourself?
- **Ballet Share:** Now that your students have had time to brainstorm, move to a full class discussion and complete the “K” (What we Know) section of your 3 column Ballet KWL chart. Use the questions above to remind students of what they shared with their partner and add students' thoughts to your chart.
- **Ballet Question:** Move to the “W” (What we Want to know) section of the KWL chart. What questions do your students have about ballet? What do they want to know as they spend the next 8 classes learning more about it?
- **Nutcracker Think/Pair:** Ask students to take 1–2 minutes to silently think about what they know about *The Nutcracker*. Then have them turn and share the answers to the following questions with a partner:
 - Where have you seen or heard about this show or story before?
 - What images pop into your mind when you hear “*The Nutcracker*”?
 - Have you ever seen *The Nutcracker*?
- **Nutcracker Share:** Now that your students have had time to brainstorm, move to a full class discussion and add to the “K” (What we Know) section of your 3 column KWL chart. Use the questions above to remind students of what they shared with their partner, and add students' thoughts to your chart.
- **Nutcracker Question:** Move to the “W” (What we Want to know) section of the KWL chart. What questions do your students have about the show specifically? What do they want to know as they spend the next 8 classes learning more about it?



INTRO TO BALLET — 10 Minutes

Note for Educators: To introduce ballet to your students, we recommend the websites listed on the online resources sheet in your curriculum packet. If you have the ability to get them, an additional introduction could come from reading the following books: *Invitation to Ballet* by Carolyn Vaughan, *The Nutcracker Comes to America* by Chris Barton, *Taking Flight* by Michaela DePrince, *Ballet Spectacular* published by the Royal Ballet, or the NPR podcast interviewing Jennifer Homans, author of *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet*.

- **Ballet is a special way to tell stories**

- Ballet is a special way to tell stories. Usually, when we listen to or read a story, it uses words (just like the story they read). In some books, pictures are used to help tell the story too. Think about what we have talked about today with ballet. If I were to tell you that ballet uses something different than words or pictures to tell a story, could you guess what it uses?

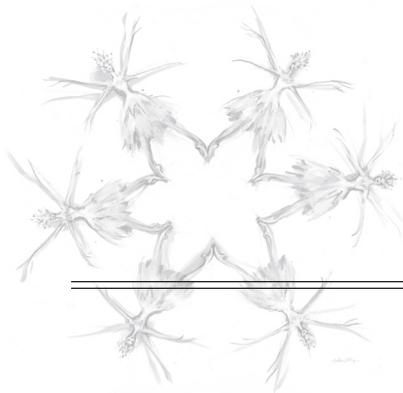
- **Note to Educators:** Possible answers might be: Costumes, scenery, etc. All of these are correct, to some extent, and you can let the students know you'll return to those later.

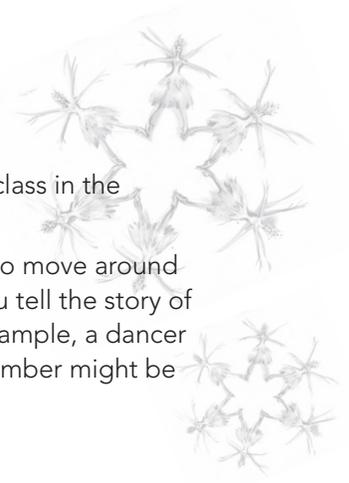
- Ballet uses movement to tell a story. The dancers use their bodies, moving them in different ways on the stage, to tell the audience what is happening in the story.

TRY IT OUT! — 10 Minutes

Note for Educators: This element of class will provide students the opportunity to explore how movement and dance can be used in a variety of ways to tell a story. If it's feasible in your classroom space, we recommend you clear a large open area (perhaps pushing desks to the perimeter of the room) for these activities, truly allowing your students to explore movement using their full bodies.

- The production of *The Nutcracker*, and any ballet, comes together as a result of the collaboration of various teams..
- Think about the different elements you see in a production — what teams are necessary in order to get a ballet successfully to opening night?
 - Take 2–3 minutes to quickly brainstorm, writing the responses on the board. This could be anything from dancers and choreographers, to lighting/costume/set designers, musicians, or an audience.
 - Once you have brainstormed a list, it is time to try out a bit of movement storytelling with the build-a-shape activity.





• **Build a Shape**

- Instructor chooses one of the Artistic Teams from the brainstorm list created by the class in the above activity.
- Instructor begins to play music from the Nutcracker playlist and students are asked to move around the room in the way someone on that team might prepare for the work. How can you tell the story of preparing for the job of creating using just movement and facial expression? (For example, a dancer might be stretching, a musician might be tuning his/her instrument, an audience member might be excitedly approaching the theatre.)
- Instructor then calls out one of four options:
 - **“Solo”** — students create the shape on their own, in personal space
 - **“Duet”** — students choose a partner to create the shape with
 - **“Trio”** — students break into groups of three to create the shape
 - **“Ensemble”** — students work as a full class to create the shape (We recommend using this option only once or twice after moving through the smaller groupings several times.)
- Instructor provides four counts of eight (count out loud to 8 four times) for students to find their groupings and create a shape representing the designated production team together using just their bodies.
 - If there is an odd student or two out in creating the shape groupings, these students should serve as audience members with the teacher, providing feedback on the shapes and jumping in for the next round.
- Once student shapes have been made (or four counts of 8 are up), teacher stops the music and students freeze where they are with the shape.
- Instructor moves around the space pointing out key features of the created shapes that help to identify the productions teams. Options might include:
 - The levels (high, middle, low) included in the shape
 - Rounded or straight shapes/what the students’ frozen shape is showing
 - Use of partnering (Are members of the group connected? Not connected? What does that say about the Artistic Team?)
- Repeat process with all of the Artistic Teams on the list, encouraging students to find new groupings/ partners each time.

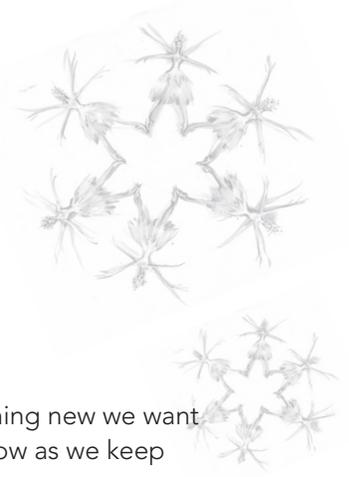
COOL DOWN* — 10 Minutes

(included in your curriculum packet)

Note for Educators: *Similarly to the warm up, the cool down ritual allows artists to formally wrap up the work for the day and prepare to head back “into the world.” This important piece of the class will help your students to reflect on what they’ve learned today, and mentally shift into the next part of the school day. Select the cool down that works best for you from the glossary. We suggest maintaining the same cool down throughout the entire unit.*



CLASS 2: INTRODUCTION TO THE STORY/SETTING/COSTUMES/DANCERS



WARM-UP — 10 Minutes

REVIEW/REFOCUS — 5 Minutes

- **Review Ballet KWL Chart Reminder:** Last class, we talked about ballet. Is there anything new we want to add to our chart about what we Learned about ballet or about what we Want to know as we keep exploring it?
- **Review Telling Stories with our Body:** Remember that dancers use their bodies and facial expressions to tell us a story. Do a quick review round of the “Build a Shape” activity from the previous class, using the “Telling a Story” prompts in your Curriculum Packet, to both complete your physical warmup, and recall how we can use physical and facial expression to tell a story.

INTRODUCING THE NUTCRACKER STORY AND SETTING — 30 Minutes

Note for Educators: Now that your students have explored emotion through movement, it’s time to look at the story being told through dance in *The Nutcracker*.

- **“Nutcracker Basics” Video**

- **Note for Educators:** This short video overviews the creation of Christopher Wheeldon’s *Nutcracker* for the Joffrey Ballet.

- **“The History of The Nutcracker” Video**

- **Note for Educators:** The *Nutcracker* that you and your students will see as part of this experience is unique — while it follows a similar storyline as the traditional ballet, it was created specifically for *The Joffrey Ballet*. The story is set in Chicago at the time of the World’s Fair, and the characters and plot are adjusted to reflect this time and place. As you move forward with your exploration of the performance, be sure you are using the resources connected to this specific performance and not other versions of *The Nutcracker* story!

- **Share the Story:** Once you have finished viewing the video, ask what stood out to them about the story. Who are the main characters? What are the major settings? What are the major events of the story?
- **Added Movement Challenge:** Can anyone create a frozen picture, using their full body and facial expression, with a partner to show us this challenge? Think of it like you’re creating a photograph of the moment with your bodies.

COOL DOWN — 10 Minutes



CLASS 3: INVESTIGATING THE STORY THROUGH ARTISTIC ELEMENTS



WARM-UP — 10 Minutes

THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Note for Educators: Over the next four classes, students will break into groups to investigate the various artistic teams that work together to create a performance. Each group will be looking at the Nutcracker story from their artistic team's perspective, and creating a final project reflecting their exploration. Today, we will kick off this investigation by introducing the role of each team and allowing students to select the group they'd like to join.

WORKING TOGETHER TO ACCOMPLISH OUR GOAL

Remember the story of the Nutcracker we heard yesterday? In order to move that story from writing on a page onto a full performance, a lot of different teams need to work together to create what the audience sees.

• **Brainstorm — 10 Minutes**

Let's take a moment to brainstorm: what different things might be needed to create a full performance of Nutcracker?

– Allow students to brainstorm, and put this list on the board. If they're having trouble getting started, prompt them with: "Let's start with just the dance. What needs to happen so that the dancers know what to do when they go to the stage?" (Hopefully they'll get to "someone needs to create the movements," and you can continue on from there!)

• ***Artistic Teamwork Overview — 10 Minutes**

– Once your class brainstorm is complete, move onto the "Artistic Teamwork!" sheet which provides quick definitions for the artistic teams we'll be working with (found in curriculum packet):

- Choreographers
- Costume Designers
- Lighting Designers
- Set Designers
- Sound Designers

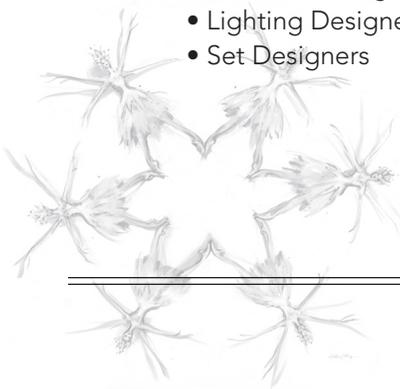
• ***Artistic Team Assignment Overview — 15 Minutes**

– Over the next few classes, we're going to become members of these artistic teams and explore the Nutcracker story through their unique lens!

– Go through *Assignment Overview (found in curriculum packet) with class

– Break class into Artistic Teams — these are the groups that they will work with over the next four classes to both research their topic and create their artistic presentation. For most effective work, we suggest that groups be comprised of no more than 4 students. Again, the artistic teams are:

- Choreographers
- Costume Designers
- Lighting Designers
- Set Designers

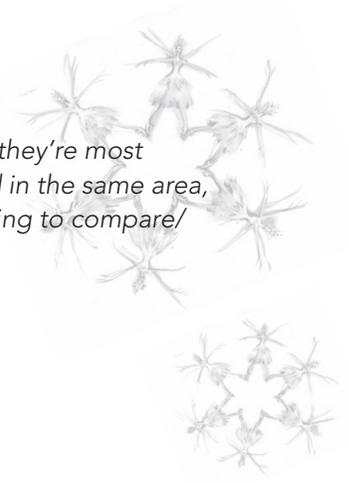


Note for Educators: We recommend allowing students to select the artistic team area they're most interested in. It's okay if not every area is covered. If more than 4 students are interested in the same area, we recommend allowing two groups to separately explore this area — it will be interesting to compare/contrast their different responses to the assignment!

- **Break Into Groups — 5 Minutes**

- Break class in small groups and distribute Assignment Packet

COOL DOWN — 10 Minutes



CLASS 4: INVESTIGATING THE WORLD'S FAIR

WARM-UP — 10 Minutes

WORK TIME — 30 Minutes

Students divide into Artistic teams to work on projects

- Students should begin by re-reading the Nutcracker story, circling or highlighting any parts of the story that they think are particularly important for their artistic team to make note of.
- They can then begin working through the assignment packet, with the goal of completing steps 1–3 by the end of class.

Note for Educators: Online resources to find answers for the research topics are below. With these open-ended prompts, we encourage you to point students toward these reliable sources for their investigation.

- To start, check out this great online resource about the [World's Fair](#), specifically for kids!
- Resource for [architectural features and vocabulary](#)
- Resource for other [Chicago events](#) at the time of the Fair

• Further Resources:

- [Women at the Fair](#)
- [Encyclopedia of Chicago](#)
- [“Tour the Fair” Resource](#)

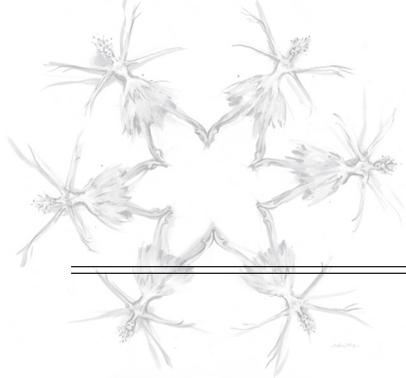
Architecture of the Fair:

- [World's Columbian Exposition](#)
- [How did the 1893 World's Fair impact Chicago and its architecture?](#)
- [“Walking Tour” of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition](#)
- [What Remains of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair](#)

GROUP CHECK-IN — 10 Minutes

- Teacher should circulate during this time to check-in with each artistic team. Teams will need to begin working on final artistic presentations by midway through next class, so if work is still needed to prepare it might be worth assigning it as homework.

COOL DOWN — 10 Minutes



CLASS 5: INVESTIGATING THE STORY THROUGH ARTISTIC ELEMENTS



WARM-UP — 10 Minutes

FINAL IN-CLASS WORK TIME — 20 Minutes

Students divide into Artistic teams to work on projects

ARTISTIC PRESENTATION PREPARATION — 20 Minutes

- Groups should use the template in the Assignment packet to plan the most effective way to share their artistic team’s vision and design with the rest of the class. Next class, each artistic team will be presenting their unique vision for their elements of the production, which should include:
 - Visual representation of their concept
 - Supporting detail from the story and their research to support the choices made
 - A plan of how the vision will be realized (materials needed, time necessary to complete, and so forth)

Note for Educators: *More detail on the team presentations can be found in the assignment packet. Encourage your students to think creatively about ways they can visually represent their interpretation of the story to the class in a clear and understandable way. They are moving through a similar process as professional designers, who must ensure that the entire artistic team clearly understands their vision and how it fits within the larger context of the show in order to effectively create a cohesive production!*

COOL DOWN — 10 Minutes



ARTISTIC CHALLENGE!

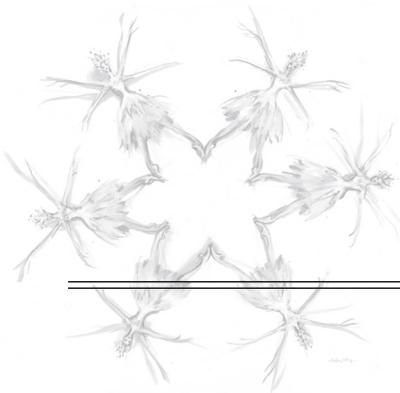
If there is time following your students' presentations, challenge the class to work as a full artistic/production team.

• Unify the Vision

- Right now, your artistic teams likely have several different “visions” for the show. Take a moment as a class and identify whether any artistic teams' ideas might work well together in the same production. Maybe there will be several to group together, maybe there won't be any!
- List the various “visions” on the board. Your mission, as a full class, is to choose the one vision you think is the strongest for our production.
- Lead a class conversation of the strengths and challenges of each vision direction. Students will be partial to the one that they created, but encourage them to enter the conversation with an open mind — which of these ideas can everyone get excited about?
- After the class conversation, put it to a vote — which vision do we hypothetically want to move forward with as a full class? Acknowledge that, in moving forward with one vision we will not be using some really great ideas. This is all a part of the creation process — maybe in the future, when another production of this show is produced, those alternate ideas will be used! (Have students consider the remakes of their favorite movies, or books being made into movies — some great elements of the original are almost always changed to align with a new vision. There are hundreds of possibilities!)
- Once you land on your class vision, ask all artistic teams to share what they might adjust in their design to better align with this larger concept. Maybe it's just a few tweaks, or maybe it would entail a full re-do of their design! This can simply be shared out in conversation — acknowledge each change and ask students to consider the importance of all teams being in line with a common concept and vision before the design process starts. Otherwise, look at how much work would need to be re-done!

Note for Educators: *One of the learning opportunities of this challenge is the realization that, throughout the creation and production process, even some great ideas are “tabled” to be used at another time. This revision/rethinking element is crucial to the creative process, just as it is to the writing process or process of scientific investigation. Sometimes we learn the most from the things that don't work or that we don't use in the end!*

COOL DOWN — 10 Minutes



CLASS 7: PREPARING FOR THE VIDEO

WARM-UP — 10 Minutes

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE PERFORMANCE VIDEO — 15 Minutes

What have we learned?

Take a moment to review your KWL chart from the first few classes — can we add anything to these?

What can we expect?

Ask students if they've ever watched a dance performance before. What is it like? What will they see and do? Ask students if they've ever been to a live performance before? What are some differences between watching a dance performance virtually and attending a live performance?

NOTE: *It is important to be clear that the performance the students will watch is not the full performance of the Nutcracker. During your reflection class you'll connect on what pieces of the story they've learned were not in the performance, and how they imagine those would be staged.*

COOL DOWN — 10 Minutes

CLASS 8: REFLECTING ON THE SHOW

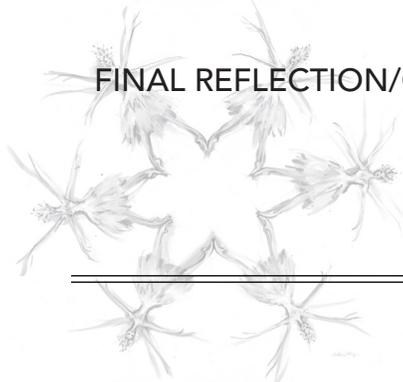
WARM-UP — 10 Minutes

REFLECTING ON THE PERFORMANCE — 25 Minutes

Note for Educators: *Depending on what works best with your students, we recommend taking 10 minutes at the beginning of this class to ask them to journal about their experience of the ballet. They are free to draw or write anything they remember from the performance video, any connections they've made to the work you've been doing in class, and any questions they still have. Then you'll gather in a group to share these reflections and wrap up. It is likely that this final class will be shorter than the previous classes.*

- **Personal Reflection:** Ask students to personally journal or draw what they remember from the performance video. Think about how the dancers used movement to tell the story — did something stand out to you? What was the set/scenery like? What were the costumes like? How did the story of the Joffrey's Nutcracker compare to the original story of the Nutcracker? What were some differences and similarities between the stories?
- **Class Reflection:** Have students share out what they reflected on. Do we have any similarities or differences between our reflections? What questions do we have?
- **The Rest of The Story:** Since the performance were only parts of the story, what pieces were missing? How do you imagine those looking now that we've seen the performance? What do you think the various artistic teams of the production might do to complete the story?

FINAL REFLECTION/COOL DOWN — 10 Minutes



SYNOPSIS

ACT I

It is Christmas Eve in Chicago, 1892. Workers from around the world are constructing the World's Columbian Exposition, which will open in five months. Marie, the daughter of one of the workers, encounters a group of boys on the construction site who show off things they've stolen. Marie's younger brother Franz steals a small red bundle from a boy's sled, and a Rat Catcher terrifies Franz.

Marie and Franz return to their home, where their widowed mother, a sculptress, is creating a great golden statue, which will preside over the fair.

Workers from the fair and their families soon arrive at the shack with decorations, a small tree, and much food and drink. A wonderful Christmas party begins.

The man who has designed and created the World's Fair, a mysterious figure known as The Great Impresario, surprises everyone and shows up, along with his apprentice (the rich boy from whom Franz stole the red bundle earlier). The Great Impresario entertains the workers with an enchanting vision of his fair.

He distributes gifts for everyone, but one is missing. Franz realizes it's the red bundle he'd stolen. The Great Impresario produces it like a magic trick and gives it to Marie. She unwraps it and discovers a beautiful Nutcracker inside. Just then, the Rat Catcher frightens Franz, who drops the Nutcracker, breaking it. It is swiftly fixed by The Great Impresario, but the party is now winding to a close and soon everyone leaves.

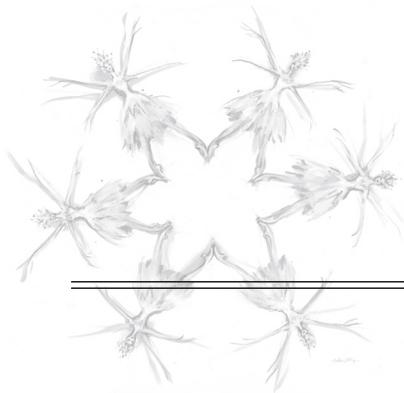
That night something very strange happens. Marie awakens and is shocked to see rats kidnap Franz! The Great Impresario returns, and with a wave of his hand, the little tree from the party grows until it seems to have taken over the entire world. The Nutcracker, now life-size and alive, appears from within its branches. The Rat King leads a battle against the Nutcracker. Marie distracts the Rat King and the Nutcracker kills him.

Franz is rescued, and the rats carry off their king, vowing revenge. The Nutcracker is transformed into Prince Peter. It begins to snow. A magical gondola comes to take The Great Impresario, the Prince, and Marie off into the night.

ACT II

The gondola delivers The Great Impresario, the Prince, and Marie to the edge of a lake, where they are greeted by the Queen of the Fair, a vision in gold. The Queen grants them a visit to the Dream Fair. They move from pavilion to pavilion, where countries from around the world are represented. Soon The Great Impresario and the Queen of the Fair have fallen in love, which causes the Dream Fair to explode with light.

Marie wakes up from her dazzling dream. It is Christmas Day.



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PREPARED FOR THE JOFFREY BALLET BY **KRISTEN HANSEL**