



National Dance Week Projects

- Objectives
- To use dance based activities to further the study and understanding of academic skills.
 - To encourage every student to express him / her self through creative movement.
 - To begin developing an understanding and appreciation of dance as an art form.

Equipment **The Tales of Beatrix Potter** DVD (danced by Dancers of the Royal Ballet)
UPC – 013131222692

Dvd player and tv or projector to watch the disc on (the ability to pause and chapter select would be beneficial)

Optimal room set up would be to have the viewing area in one corner of the room and a large area open to allow the students to move safely.

Paper and pencils for each student

Math Skills – Observation (approximate activity length – 6 minutes)

Select Chapter 4 – “*Off to the Picnic*”

Play this chapter for the students to watch.

Once all of the mice have entered the stage, ask the students to count the number of mice and tell you the total. (correct answer – 6)

When the mice dance in pairs, how many pairs are there? (correct answer – 3)

How many mice are dressed as females? (correct answer – 3)

How many mice are dressed as males? (correct answer - 3)

Pause or stop the dvd when the last 2 mice pick up the picnic basket and go through the door. Rewind to the beginning of the chapter and play the piece during the modeling series to provide music for them to work with.

Math Skills – Modeling (approximate activity length – 6 minutes)

Once the music begins, tell the students to pretend they are mice and move into groups of 6 students (or the closest number that works with your class count). Allow 1 minute for them to create their groups.

As a group, ask the students to demonstrate movements that they remember seeing in the performance. Some suggestions are – walks on the balls of the feet, jumps, turns and controlled runs. Encourage the students to work in a circle as a group. Continue this activity for 1 minute.

Ask the students to break into smaller groups of 2 or 3 (again depending on class count) and find a space to move in. Allow 1 minute for the creation of these new groups. Ask the students to do this by using math functions. “How many is 6 minus 3 (for a group of 3) or 6 minus 4 (for a group of 2)”. Or ask them to split into 2 or 3 even sized groups.

Tell the students to work with their partners, if your classroom rules allow for students to be able to hold hands or have appropriate physical contact with each other, encourage them to do so. Ask the students to select a movement and repeat it 2 times if the students are in pairs or 3 times if the students are in groups of 3. Then have the students repeat the movement 1 at a time. For example, if the movement is a jump and it is a group of 3, all 3 students jump 3 times together and then each student takes a turn to jump alone. Continue this part of the exercise for 1 ½ minutes. Encourage the students to count aloud when tracking the repetitions of the movement.

Ask the students to separate from their partners and move back to the viewing area, remaining in the character of the mice. Allow 1 ½ minutes for this part of the exercise.

Stop or pause the dvd.

Writing Skills – Observation (approximate activity length – 6 minutes)

Fast forward or skip ahead to chapter 8 and have the students watch the dancing. Stop the dvd after the two piglets that leave finish eating and begin to continue their journey. Ask the students the following questions about the scene they just watched.

How many piglets are dancing? (correct answer - 6)

Are there any other animals in the scene? (correct answer – yes, a mother pig)

How many piglets leave the yard? (correct answer – 2)

Were the piglets that left male or female? (correct answer – male)

What does the mother pig give each of the 2 piglets that leave? (correct answer – a stick with a package attached to it)

What is in the packages? (correct answer – food)

Writing Skills – Practical (approximate activity length - 15 minutes)

Ask the students to write about the story that they just watched. Some possible topics are:

What they liked about the story

What they didn't like about the story

The costumes

The movement choices

The emotions / mood of the characters at different times in the story

The students' interpretations of the story

Science – Observation

(approximate activity length – 7 minutes)

Fast forward or skip to Chapter 10.

Call attention to the water in the landscape and ask the students to name animals that live in the water and guess what animal they are going to see next. (correct answer – any animal that lives in or near water – i.e. – fish, turtles, frogs, tadpoles, snakes, hippos etc)

What type of precipitation begins falling in this scene? (correct answer – rain)

What does the frog jump on in the water and use as a raft? (correct answer - lily pads or leaves)

What is the frog doing with the sticks? (correct answers – pushing the raft and fishing)

Do frogs fish in real life? (correct answer – no)

What do frogs like to catch to eat in real life? (correct answer – flies and bugs)

Pause or stop the dvd when it begins to rain again and the frog jumps back inside his house.

Rewind to the beginning of chapter 10 so that the students have the music to work with.

Science – Practical

(approximate activity length – 5 minutes)

Have the students spread out around the room with space to move in all directions. Have the scene you just watched playing in the background for music.

Ask the students if they can remember whether the frog's knees were bent or straight when he was getting ready to jump. (correct answer – bent)

Ask the students to try to jump without allowing their knees to bend. What happens? (They should not be able to get off of the floor).

Next, ask the students to bend their knees a little bit and see how high they can jump. (These should be small jumps).

Finally ask the students to go as low as possible, even putting their hands on the floor, when they get ready to jump and see how their jumps change. (This should allow the students to have higher jumps).

Encourage the students to try jumping forward, backwards and sideways, always landing on their feet.

