



Teacher Pack



Collection: Dance Your Socks Off
Course: Create an Alphabet Dance
Year Level: 3-4
Lessons: 5 x 45 Minutes



Overview

Create an Alphabet Dance follows on from the Learn Alphabet Dance course and outlines how students can transform their movement sequences into a polished dance performance.

Specifically, this course demonstrates how students can devise a group chorus, integrate transitions and remember their routine. The activities also support students to consider the role of music and timing. Through the lesson series students have an opportunity to explore different dance styles, exercise their bodies in creative ways and practice spelling at the same time.

ARTS:LIVE courses are supported by engaging videos, audio files, student activity sheets and home learning activities. Further information related to this course including teaching tips, pedagogical approaches, glossary terms and more can be accessed through the Create the Alphabet Dance Overview webpage.

Course: Create an Alphabet Dance

Lesson One: Transitions in the Alphabet Dance

Learning Area: The Arts

Strands: Dance

Time: 45 Minutes

Year Level: 3-4

Content Descriptor:

- Improvise and structure movement ideas for dance sequences using the elements of dance and choreographic devices (ACADAM005).
- Practise technical skills safely in fundamental movements (ACADAM006).

Learning Focus:

- Students create transitions between the letter moves they developed in the Learn the Alphabet Dance course.

Time:	Teaching and Learning Strategies:	Preparation and Resources:
10 minutes	Reviewing the Alphabet Dance Following from the previous course, students should now know at least two Alphabet Dance phrases. Discuss: are there any 'awkward corners' in the Alphabet Dance so far? Sometimes, certain letters and their accompanying movements are harder to remember than others, and the group gets stuck at that point each time. This can happen when you are transitioning from one batch of four letters to another. Practise those transition points: if you learned I, J, K, L and M, N, O, P in separate batches of four, also practise K, L, M, N in order to get used to thinking ahead into the next batch.	Relevant ARTS:LIVE resources • Transitions in the Alphabet Dance activity sheet. Additional resources required • a clear space with enough room for each student to move freely with their arms stretched out to the side • comfortable clothing • a music player • a device for recording video/stills.
35 minutes	Creating a dance Now choose a broad theme to work from. This may be related to a classroom inquiry topic, or theme already chosen for integrated studies. It may be related to a book the class is reading, or a creative writing topic. With your theme chosen, brainstorm a list of words related to this theme. Alternatively, you may choose to have one sentence that sums up your theme. • Ask for volunteers to try dancing some of the words. • Try some with the whole class, spelling the word out loud letter by letter, while dancing it.	

- Choose four, five or six words that you feel suit the dance vocabulary best or that feel most appropriate to your overall theme.
- Divide the class into small groups, four to five people per group is a good size. If you worked in small groups to choreograph the alphabet (and so don't know every movement as a whole class) you will need to reset the groups now so that each new group has a representative from each of the earlier groups.
- Then, each group chooses one of the chosen words from the brainstorm shortlist to prepare and dance together.

Note: It may take your students more than one 45 minute session to complete the content of this lesson. Allow adequate follow up time to ensure the majority of students have completed the lesson focus before moving on.

Course: Create an Alphabet Dance

Lesson Two: Creating a Chorus

Learning Area: The Arts

Strands: Dance

Time: 45 Minutes

Year Level: 3-4

Content Descriptor:

- Improvise and structure movement ideas for dance sequences using the elements of dance and choreographic devices (ACADAM005).
- Perform dances using expressive skills to communicate ideas, including telling cultural or community stories (ACADAM007).
- Identify how the elements of dance and production elements express ideas in dance they make, perform and experience as audience, including exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance (ACADAR008).

Learning Focus:

- Students combine the individual moves developed in previous lessons to form words and, ultimately, a dance routine.

Time:	Teaching and Learning Strategies:	Preparation and Resources:
20 minutes	Safety • Encourage slow, controlled movements in the warm-up sequences. Vigorous shaking often feels invigorating, but can result in suddenly dislocated limbs! • Stretches, slow rolls and circles, and shifts of weight from one foot to the other are good things to include, and there are many possible variations of each of these. • Start by establishing ground rules for personal space. • You could also include a row formation in this exercise, as this may be the way that students eventually perform their dance. • Ensure all dance activities take place in a suitable space that is free of trip hazards. • If you need to move tables and chairs regularly, develop a routine for this (perhaps in time to a song or chant) so that your students become familiar with what is required, and efficient at doing it. Process Ask the students: 'Is there one word in particular (from our selection of preferred words) that could be performed by the whole group, and be used as a chorus?' Write all the words offered on a whiteboard. Choose one of your words to be the 'chorus' word. If there is a theme, select a word that refers to the theme. Practise the dance-word several times with the whole group.	Relevant ARTS:LIVE resources • Creating a Chorus and Combining Your Moves activity sheet. Additional resources required • a clear space with enough room for each student to move freely with their arms stretched out to the side • comfortable clothes • a music player • A device for recording video/stills.

25 minutes

Next, invent an opening line that incorporates this word, but places it in a sentence (see example below). Then, ask the group for suggestions as to how this sentence (the dance sequence that comes from spelling the word) could be structured into a dance and chant sequence. Please see the sequence below.

Transitions in Dance video example

Whole group is standing in formation.

Bananas! Bananas!	4 stomps forward
I – Like – BANANAS!	Standing still, clap the rhythm of the words
Bananas! Bananas!	4 stomps backwards
I – Like – BANANAS!	Standing still, clap the rhythm of the words
B – A – N – A – N – A – S!	Dancing the letters and saying them out loud
B – A – N – A – N – A – S!	Dancing the letters and saying them out loud
B – A – N – A – N – A – S!	Dancing the letters and saying them out loud
B – A – N – A – N – A – S!	Dancing the letters and saying them out loud

Things to remember

- Maintain a respectful, warm appreciation of individuals' contributions to ensure no one feels exposed or subject to ridicule by other students through one of their suggestions.
- As a teacher, join in everything you ask the class to do. This is not only good modelling, it also validates and endorses each of the ideas as being appropriate and possible.
- In dance, teacher participation can be a vital element in individual students' sense of emotional safety.

Course: Create an Alphabet Dance

Lesson Three: Developing Transitions

Learning Area: The Arts

Strands: Dance

Time: 45 Minutes

Year Level: 3-4

Content Descriptor:

- Improvise and structure movement ideas for dance sequences using the elements of dance and choreographic devices (ACADAM005).
- Perform dances using expressive skills to communicate ideas, including telling cultural or community stories (ACADAM007).
- Identify how the elements of dance and production elements express ideas in dance they make, perform and experience as audience, including exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance (ACADAR008).

Learning Focus:

- Develop dance transitions to move from one move to another.

Time:	Teaching and Learning Strategies:	Preparation and Resources:
10 minutes	Introduction This session explores the challenge of creating transitions between moves and develop skills in critiquing and refining work collaboratively. If your students are from culturally diverse backgrounds, draw on their traditional use of language and dance styles for inspiration.	Additional resources required • a clear space with enough room for each student to move freely with their arms stretched out to the side • comfortable clothes • a music player • a device for recording video/stills.
20 minutes	Process In small groups, choose a word or a phrase to dance. Dance and film the word without using any transitions. Work collaboratively by: trying out different people's ideas, listening openly to suggestions, making decisions as a group to develop creative and 'dancerly' ways to get from one letter to the next.	
15 minutes	Film it Dance and film this version, then compare the two filmed versions by playing them back to the class and discussing which one students like better and why. As a class, use these comparison videos to discuss and analyse the kinds of transitions that are both effective, because they enhance the look of the dance, and useful because they help the moves to flow, or fit with any accompanying music.	

Course: Create an Alphabet Dance

Lesson Four: Duration and Dance

Learning Area: The Arts

Strands: Dance

Time: 45 Minutes

Year Level: 3-4

Learning Focus:

- Students explore timing and duration in dance.

Time:	Teaching and Learning Strategies:	Preparation and Resources:
5 minutes	Introduction Focus attention on the musical element of duration and the time required to complete each move and relate this to the tempo/beat of a piece of music. This will build awareness and understanding of the physical discipline of performing moves in sync with a piece of music.	Additional resources required - a clear space with enough room for each student to move freely with their arms stretched out to the side - comfortable clothes - a music player - a device for recording video/stills.
40 minutes	Process Some moves have a short duration, others take longer to complete. Discuss the idea of duration, and nominate examples from your alphabet of moves that have long/short durations. Divide the class into small groups and divide the alphabet of moves between each of the groups. Ask each group to perform each of their assigned letter moves. When students have completed their letter moves, conduct a discussion asking them to analyse the amount of time each letter move requires to be performed. Students can categorise their moves as 1-beat, 2-beat, 3-beat moves, and so on, and write down their findings. Some travelling moves may require 4 or more beats to be performed. As a class, share the duration findings for each letter move. Select a phrase or sentence to dance, and predict how many beats will be required to perform it. Ask one student to keep a steady pulse going on a drum or other percussion instrument while the dance sequence is performed (or you could use a metronome if you have one).	

Course: Create an Alphabet Dance

Lesson Five: Beats and Phrases

Learning Area: The Arts

Strands: Dance

Time: 45 Minutes

Year Level: 3-4

Learning Focus:

- Students consider music and timing to refine their dance piece.

Time:	Teaching and Learning Strategies:	Preparation and Resources:
10 minutes	Lesson focus Create a dance sequence (or several sequences) with careful attention to pulse and musical phrases. This activity involves groups choreographing to a piece of music. If you do not have access to a number of separate break-out spaces, you may prefer to select a single piece of music for all the groups to work with, in order to minimise noise. Introduction Refer to students' duration findings from the previous activity. Divide class into small groups or work as a whole class. Select a piece of music to dance to and ask students to listen to the introduction several times, focusing on the 'groove' or 'feel' of it, and its pulse.	Additional resources required - a clear space with enough room for each student to move freely with their arms stretched out to the side - comfortable clothes - a music player - a device for recording video/stills.
20 minutes	The sequence Have students create a dance sequence, including transitions that will fit into a musical phrase of 16 or 32 beats. Ask students to try out their 16- or 32-beat sequence with the music. A lot of popular music is organised into phrases of 4 beats, or multiples of 4 beats. Ask your students to listen carefully to find the start of a section of music, and begin their sequence with this.	
15 minutes	The beat Next, ask the students to identify the verse and/or chorus of the song. Then have students to count the number of beats in the song. Next, have students work in their groups to create a dance sequence (or use one of the sequences they have already made) to fit that section of the music.	