

# Fit to Dance

## SCHOOLS

### PE DANCE LESSONS

#### OVERVIEW

Once the class story is complete and the children are familiar with it you can move onto the dance lessons. The aim is to encourage the children to be active and energised, whilst learning that stories can be performed through dance as well as through speaking, acting and drawing. The videos of the *Disney on Ice* performers and live footage of the show will help them to understand how elements of character movement, expression and costume help build up a performance.

Using the characters, setting and obstacles that form the key elements of the story, they create their dance. Use the four lesson structure below, although you may wish to plan this over more lessons depending on the age of your class.

#### ★ **Lesson one: Character movement**

The children explore the working space using movements that reflect the physicality of their characters e.g. big, heavy and slow for a dragon or light, nimble and quick for a fairy. They practice showing how they are feeling by using a range of expressions and gestures, and combine that with movement patterns to give an overall sense of the characters.

#### **Lesson two: Exploring settings**

- ★ Once they have established their characters physicality and personality, they think about placing them in the setting for their story. How will that affect how they move? For example swimming movements underwater or wading through deep snow. They work out suitable ways to adapt their basic movements and practice moving round the space imagining they are in the setting.

#### **Lesson three: Overcoming obstacles**

- ★ The class turn the obstacles they have chosen in their quest into movements and build up a short sequence that shows how they are getting round, through or over the problem!

#### **Lesson four: Sequencing**

- Finally the class devises an end sequence e.g. where they find the lost item or rescue a pet.
- ★ They put the sequence they have developed over the four lessons together, working out any transitions they are needed to link the scenes and finalise the routine. You may want to use further lessons to polish the work for a school assembly or public performance.



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The four dance lessons broadly mirror the English story builder lessons in sequencing as the children work through the character, setting and obstacle elements.

There are three Dance Inspiration sheets covering characters, settings and obstacles which you may find useful to support your teaching and learning over these lessons. These include eight count character movement phrases which can be used as a starting point for character movements.

### CURRICULUM LINKS AND OBJECTIVES

#### P.E. Dance:

- ★ Perform dances using simple movement patterns
- ★ Development of spatial awareness
- ★ Moving with bodily control, co-ordination, flexibility and balance

#### PSHE:

- ★ Dancing as part of a healthy lifestyle
- ★ Working individually, in partners and in groups
- ★ Developing trust and co-operation
- ★ Having an enjoyable and motivating time

### WARMING UP

Before you start each dance lesson, remind children about the importance of warming up before they start dancing. Tell children that before a *Disney on Ice* show, each performer needs to warm up their entire body by stretching, gentle jogging or balance exercises. They do many spins, jumps, leaps and somersaults on the ice, so they need to ensure their muscles are warm to reduce the risk of injury. A cool down after performing is also important.

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PE DANCE LESSONS

GLOSSARY OF DANCE TERMS ✨ ✨

**Canon:**

Individuals and groups perform the same movement phrase at different times, in sequence.

**Gesture:**

Movement of body parts to convey feeling and expression.

**Movement patterns:**

A repeated sequence of dance movement ideas.

**Phrase:**

A short sequence of steps, e.g. an eight count beat which has the feeling of a beginning and end.

**Sequence:**

A series of movements linked together in a dance which has continuity and meaning.

**Transition:**

A connective movement between sections of a dance.








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## LESSON FIVE: CHARACTERS AND EXPRESSIONS

### RESOURCES

- ★ Music
- ★ *Disney on Ice* video: Characters
- ★ *Disney on Ice* video: Expressions and Gestures
- ★ Bank of descriptive words for their character (from the English lesson)
- ★ Dance Inspiration Sheet: Character cards

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ★ To travel around the room and improve spatial awareness.
- ★ To develop knowledge of travelling floor patterns and the importance of using all of the space available.
- ★ To begin to understand isolation of body parts, e.g. moving just their arm/hand/leg without moving the rest of body.
- ★ Communicate a character through movement and expression with simple eight count phrases.
- ★ Develop simple dance sequences.

### WARM UP

- ★ Remind children of the importance of warming up.
- ★ Choose a warm-up travelling movement e.g. skipping and ask children to move around the room to get them energised.
- ★ On your command, shout out a character and an emotion, e.g. a bear who feels sad. They need to change their movement style – so this may be a slow plod with their head down.



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## LESSON FIVE: CHARACTERS AND EXPRESSIONS

### MAIN ACTIVITIES

#### Activity one:

- ★ Remind children of their magical stories and the characters that are in them. Choose a character from the story and ask children to describe what they look like and what their personality is like.
- ★ Ask children to think about how this character will travel from one side of the room to the other using key descriptive words. Discuss how they think the character will move, e.g. if it is a dragon, it may stomp heavily and slowly across the room, moving its head quickly from side to side as it sniffs the air. Watch the video of Natasha demonstrate how Maleficent the dragon and Tinkerbell move in a curious way.
- ★ Use the Character Cards to help the children explore some movement ideas using eight count phrases.
- ★ Put some music on and allow children to explore the space around the room in character.

#### Activity two:

- ★ Watch the video of Matt and Taryn who explain how gestures and expressions are used in the show to help the audience understand what the characters are feeling.
- ★ Ask children to practice a few with their partner and think of other emotions if they can. Explain how gestures, like a thumbs up or a wave or expressions, tell the audience how the character is feeling.
- ★ Give children an action for their character, e.g. waking up, eating food, going for a walk. Ask them to demonstrate this by using exaggerated expressions and gestures. One half performs to the other; ask the audience group to guess how they are feeling based on the expressions.

### COOL DOWN

Using their characters, give the children an action, such as 'getting ready for bed'. Put on some appropriate calming music and ask the children to move in the style of character to show their bedtime routine. For example, lots of stretching and yawning, changing into bed clothes, washing hands and face, cleaning teeth, climbing into bed and finally drifting off to sleep.

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LESSON SIX: EXPLORING SETTINGS

RESOURCES ✨ ✨

- ★ Music
- ★ Dance Inspiration Sheet: Settings Cards
- ★ *Disney on Ice* video: Settings

LEARNING OUTCOMES ✨ ✨

- ★ Move as a character in a story setting.
- ★ Create short dance sequences.
- ★ Explore different pathways and speed to change the dynamics of the performance.
- ★ To develop knowledge of travelling floor patterns and the importance of using all of the space available.

WARM UP ✨ ✨

- ★ Remind children of the importance of warming up.
- ★ Play the game Tag, but with a twist as you choose the way that they should move around the space. For example, say the hall is full of sticky mud, so the children can try to imitate how they would move through it, then change the stimulus to 'on the sand, or on an icy lake' etc.






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## LESSON SIX: EXPLORING SETTINGS

### MAIN ACTIVITIES

#### Activity one:

- ★ Recap on the last session and the development of character movement. Explain to the class that they will be exploring the setting whilst in character.
- ★ Use the Settings Cards as inspiration for children to think about how the character moves around in the setting. Are they swimming underwater, crawling through a dark cave or wading through thick and heavy snow? Children freely move around the room to music expressing these ideas. Show the video of Natasha who explains how to move around underwater like Ariel, or run through a forest like a Prince.
- ★ Stop and share ideas.

#### Activity two:

- ★ Discuss what they may see or hear in the setting. This could be a snowman, like Olaf from Frozen or a shoal of fish underwater, like in Finding Nemo. The story they have created might feature an opening activity, such as the bear waking up from a deep sleep, or the witch practising spells.
- ★ Children explore different pathways to move around the setting, going diagonally, sideways, under, over, through etc.
- ★ Perform their ideas in groups.

### COOL DOWN

Choose a setting which could be from one of the stories featured in *Disney on Ice*, choose appropriate music – try to keep it fairly slow and relaxed. For example – the beach, with accompanying sound of the waves on the shore. Ask the children to pretend they are walking slowly down through the sand to the sea. Imagine walking through the shallow water – using small short kicking/brushing actions with their feet. Then ask them to imagine putting down their beach towel, lying onto it and to spend a moment thinking about their ‘day at the beach’ whilst lying in the warm sun. Encourage them to change lying positions a few times, and then ask them to slowly stand, packing up their ‘towel’ and leaving the beach.






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## LESSON SEVEN: OVERCOMING THE OBSTACLES

### RESOURCES

- ★ Music
- ★ Any props to help children visualise an obstacle. Bean bags/hoops, benches etc
- ★ Dance Inspiration Sheet: Obstacles Cards
- ★ *Disney on Ice* video: Expressions and Gestures

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ★ Use movement patterns to overcome obstacles in the setting.
- ★ Explore prepositions and levels in movement.
- ★ Use expression and gestures to show how the character is feeling.
- ★ Moving fluidly with flexibility and balance.

### WARM UP

- ★ Remind children of the importance of warming up.
- ★ Children get into character and travel around the setting (e.g. side steps, skipping) and play the music. Number 3 different obstacles 1 – 3 and explain the movement they will need to perform for each one. This could be from a *Disney on Ice* story or made up, for example:

1. They change direction because they can see there are wolves hiding in the forest
2. They crouch down to dodge between the flying cannon balls from a pirate ship
3. They freeze on the spot as they've seen a shark in the water.  
Shout out 1, 2 and 3 in different order and gradually get quicker so they have to think on their feet!








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## LESSON SEVEN: OVERCOMING THE OBSTACLES

### MAIN ACTIVITIES

#### Activity one:

- ★ Retell the story and remind children of the obstacles their character comes across in the story.
- ★ The children get into character. Start with the children all being the same character; retell the beginning of the story. On your cue, their character meets the obstacle.
- ★ Ask children to consider how their character will respond to the obstacle. How will they travel under/over/through it?
- ★ Use the suggestions on the Obstacles Cards or children can choreograph their own movement patterns.

#### Extension:

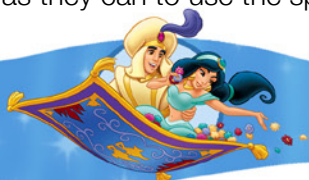
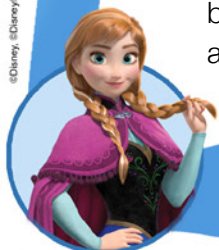
Split the group in half so that some children become the obstacle, e.g. the trees, or the lily pads. (The Obstacles Cards explains this further)

#### Activity two:

- ★ Ask children to show how the character changes mood when he/she reaches the obstacle. Use expressions and movement as a transition into the obstacle. For example, when a witch arrives at the cave and finds a sleeping troll, she could be very annoyed, so she may stomp her feet to show how cross she feels.
- ★ Think about how their character is feeling when they meet the sleeping troll. Will they be brave or scared? Remind children of the expressions and gestures used in lesson one and explore these further. Watch Taryn and Matt showing how characters feel happy, sad, scared, grumpy and frustrated. Notice how they exaggerate their actions, ask children to think why they do this.

### COOL DOWN

Talk about the different characters that you might find in your chosen setting. Using these, slowly stretch into shapes that match each character. For example, as a giant, you can roll up very slowly making yourself really tall and wide, hold that stretch and then choose another character, maybe a mouse in the cave – roll down slowly to the ground to make a closed low ball shape to represent the mouse. Encourage children to extend their arms/legs/hands/fingers as much as they can to use the space available to them.



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## LESSON EIGHT: PUTTING IT ALTOGETHER

### RESOURCES

- ★ Music
- ★ *Disney on Ice* video: Costumes
- ★ Mask templates (optional)

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

- ★ To put the character, setting and obstacle together in a sequence.
- ★ Use expression and gestures to tell the story.
- ★ Practise and think of ways to improve performance.
- ★ Provide peer feedback.

### WARM UP

- ★ Remind children of the importance of warming up.
- ★ In small groups, ask children to move around the space using different travelling movements; fast pace walking, jogging, hopping, side stepping etc when you signal the class with a whistle (for example) and call out an animal, the children run back to their group and have to make the shape of that animal with their bodies, e.g. crocodile – all sit on the floor, front person sits in a pike with arms snapping out in front, next person makes the body by crouching behind them and the 3rd person makes the tail section (if there are more people in a group, they can make the body longer etc). Other animals can include giraffe, elephant, snake, crab etc – try to introduce animals to vary the levels and size of the animal shape.

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## LESSON EIGHT: PUTTING IT ALTOGETHER

### MAIN ACTIVITIES

- ★ Recap over the movements they have done so far.
- ★ Ask children to get into a start position. This could be a freeze frame of an action of their character, e.g. an army cadet saluting, before starting the music.
- ★ Practice the dance sequence and add transitions if necessary.
- ★ Add the ending to the story.

#### Extension:

Use of props and masks will help children get into character. You can print off masks in the teachers section in the English lesson resource sheets for the children to complete. Show the class the video where Megan talks about costumes used in the *Disney on Ice* show and how they contribute to the overall performance.

You could keep children practising their dance pieces over a few more lessons until they're ready to complete a performance in class or during an assembly!

### COOL DOWN

Pick a scenario; this could be a busy city for example. Tell the children everything that they do must be in slow motion. Give them instructions such as 'you are walking down a busy street and dodging lots of people' and 'it's very windy and your hat has just blown off' or 'you reach a zebra crossing and are waiting to cross the road' etc. Keep reminding them that all movements must be in slow motion. As an extension, you can add in freeze frames at various points and get them to hold their positions.