

Teaching Guide for

My Favorite Dance

A picture book written by Nilanka Maldeniya

& illustrated by Charity Russell

Grades K-4

LANGUAGE & ARTS

Reading Comprehension

Before reading the book, help students identify the basic parts of a picture book: jacket, front cover, back cover, title page, spine, end papers.

Front cover discussion:

- Describe what you see. Who do you think the character is? What is she doing? What is the setting of the book?
- Pretend to be the character in the illustration. Pay close attention to the facial expression and body language. How do you think this character feels?
- What do you think this story is about?

Now read or listen to the book. Help students summarize in their own words what the book was about. Discuss afterwards:

- What is the girl trying to decide?
- Who are the other characters in the book?
- What are the different dance forms the girl learns?
- What is special about each type of dance?
- How does the girl feel at the end of the story?
- How do you feel about dancing? Where do you dance?
- Do you have a favorite dance? What makes it special?

Writing Activities

A character's actions can tell us what kind of person they are.

Pay close attention to the main character's actions, and the expressions on her face. Record your thoughts scene by scene.

Example

- What the girl does: Practices dancing with her partner.
- How you might describe her: Friendly, focused, learner

After gathering information about the main character, write a few new scenes for the book.



Talk about the creators of the book.

Who is the author? Who is the illustrator? What did each of them do?

Research them & discuss your findings.

Drama & Art

- Students act out story as it is read out.
- Students draw their own dance story - Create a new character and act it out (e.g. a boy who likes to break-dance).
- Have students take turns silently acting out a specific scene (i.e. charades).
- The story is in the 1st person narrative. Discuss other ways to write a story. Rewrite in the third person and also use dialogue (for younger students, use speech/thought bubbles instead).



MATH

Dance-athon

This activity will help students improve number recognition and counting skills, and also strengthen motor skills and balance.

- Turn on the music and have uninterrupted dance time
- for the kids to shake it out.
- As they dance, start calling out: Jump two times, stomp four times, and so on.
- When that portion is done, flash the number up or write it on the chalkboard (without speaking it out) and have them dance to the number of beats you show.
- Have a "dance-off" by splitting the class into teams; great for introducing the concepts of teamwork and friendly competition.

"Character" Dressed In Red

This game is a good one for counting skills.

A rhyme in which a child bounces a ball or hops on one foot while counting. The character can change per kid to make the game more fun!

*Cinderella dressed in red.
What time did you go to bed?
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12.
Prince Charming dressed in red.
What time did YOU go to bed?
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12.*

Word Problem (examples):

Younger students may need pictures and props to get to the answers:

- The girl has 4 pairs of tap shoes. She gives 1 pair to her friend. How many pairs are left?
- The teacher shows 5 dance moves. The children can only do 3 moves. How many moves do they still need to learn?
- The dance team has 4 girls and 3 boys. How many children are in the dance team?

Counting Songs

These are simple but very effective. Favorite counting songs include Five Little Ducks and 10 Little Monkeys.

To engage students further, have them act out the song. Example: if they are the monkeys, they should roll off and over the bed.

The additional dramatization makes the principle even more memorable. Also, there is no reason there cannot be many more than 10 monkeys in the bed!

SOCIAL STUDIES

With dance related games and research projects, teachers can educate students about different countries and cultures, as well as about acceptable social behaviors.

Dancing with partners

Choreograph a simple dance routine for students to perform in pairs. Dance movements should involve skipping, passing, gliding, twirling. The essential learning is in paying attention to the partner, and in respecting the partner's space and movements.

Cultural Dances

Make a list of 5-10 countries (e.g. Ireland, India, China, Russia, etc.) with the help of the students. Split into groups and use various research methods, including the school's librarian and available resources, to gather information about the traditional dance forms celebrated in those countries. If possible, watch video clips of these dance forms in the classroom. Discuss what is unique and special about each dance form. Discuss other facts about the country in question.



SCIENCE

Movements applied to Growth of Plants

Explain axial movement (movement that stays in one place). Examples: bend, twist, grow, stretch, kick, swing, etc. Have the students try these movements to music.

Explain locomotor steps (movement that travels). Examples: leap, crawl, roll, skip, gallop, walk, run, hop, etc.

The students can experience these movements with music. Use a flower growing as an example:

A flower needs water: skip and gallop as flowing water.

A flower needs air: jump and spin. A flower needs soil: axial movement: bend, stretch, etc.

One half of the class begins as a flower.

The other half dances around the flower as water, air, soil, and sunlight.

As the flowers get what they need to grow, they bloom and blossom (students use axial and locomotor movements to indicate blooming, closing, wilting, and so on).

