

INLAND PACIFIC BALLET

# *The Nutcracker*



**A STUDY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS  
OF GRADES K – 12**

Aligned with California State Content Standards

Prepared by: Inland Pacific Ballet  
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# INLAND PACIFIC BALLET

Victoria Koenig, Artistic Director • Kevin Myers, Associate Director

*Welcome!*

As part of our effort to introduce young people to the magic of ballet, we are pleased to offer The Nutcracker Study Guide as a resource for K-12 teachers bringing their students to see an Inland Pacific Ballet outreach performance. The study guide allows you to choose what best meets your needs and includes background information, a variety of specifically developed activities, and a list of available resources that can be used in the classroom before and after the performance. It is our hope that you find this information easy to use, and helpful both in preparing your students for what they will see at the theater and discussing their experience afterwards. In addition to printed information and student activity sheets that you can reproduce, we have included links to online resources such as video examples, extended learning sources, and additional information and lesson plan sources.

We want to thank educator Erica Hamel for volunteering to develop the initial draft, and the additional teachers who reviewed the guide and gave us valuable feedback. Enjoy!



Victoria Koenig, Artistic Director

## **About Inland Pacific Ballet**

Inland Pacific Ballet's Founder/Artistic Directors are Victoria Koenig and Kevin Myers. Both are southern California natives and bring a wealth of experience to their visionary leadership of this young Company. In just 15 years they have built Inland Pacific Ballet into the premier ballet company in the region, enjoying critical acclaim while performing the largest and most varied repertoire in the area. The Company's repertoire includes such classics as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Les Sylphides*, *Graduation Ball* and *Swan Lake Act II*. Full length classical masterpieces include *Giselle*, *Coppélia* and a lavish production of *The Nutcracker*. Contemporary classics include masterpieces by the legendary George Balanchine including *Serenade*, *Concerto Barocco* and *Who Cares?* and a growing body of original work that includes creative adaptations of much loved stories such as *The Little Mermaid*, *Cinderella* and *Dracula*.

While the Company is based in the Inland Empire and performs its home season from October to May as Company in Residence at the Bridges Auditorium in Claremont, Inland Pacific Ballet serves a far-reaching audience from Redlands to Los Angeles. Festival programs such as the Redlands Bowl Music Festival, Balletfest and Dance Kaleidoscope have allowed the Company to reach an ever-expanding regional audience. Regional touring has included the Luckman Fine Arts Complex in Los Angeles, the Civic Arts Plaza in Thousand Oaks and the Annenberg Theater in Palm Desert. National touring has included the Globe News Center for the Performing Arts, Amarillo Texas.

# A Young Person's Guide to the Ballet Program Summary

## Program Goals and Mission

The goal of Inland Pacific Ballet's Educational Outreach Program is to present ballet to young people in a way that will have an enduring impact on their lives. With the decline of arts education in public schools, Inland Pacific Ballet's *Young Person's Guide to the Ballet (YPG)* is a vital cultural resource for children in the visual, musical, and movement arts in Los Angeles and the Inland Empire. Inland Pacific Ballet promotes the unique power of the performing arts to nourish our communities by enriching the lives of our children.

## Program Description

Inland Pacific Ballet's Educational Outreach Program is the most extensive of its kind in Southern California, bringing the beauty of ballet and classical music to thousands of children each year. Students from public, private, home schooled and special needs schools take exciting field trips to the historic Bridges Auditorium in Claremont to see traditional ballets such as *Coppélia* and *The Nutcracker* as well as new classics like Inland Pacific Ballet's original children's ballet *The Little Mermaid & Cinderella*.

The annual YPG program typically includes 8 to 10 special morning performances of ballets chosen from Inland Pacific Ballet's repertoire that are especially suited to young audiences. Each Educational Outreach performance includes a lecture/demonstration on ballet and stage technique, which also describes the workings of a live theater and shows how a dancer tells a story without words. During the lecture/demonstration audience members are encouraged to participate in simple movement activities in their seats. Students then view a lavish professional ballet performance, followed by a lively question and answer period and an opportunity to meet the performers afterwards. For YPG we utilize one of the Inland Empire's treasures, historic Bridges Auditorium. This grand structure has an immediate, awe-inspiring impact on young people, and has a seating capacity of 2,400 suitable for the large student audiences that attend.

## Program History and Success

Inland Pacific Ballet's Educational Outreach Program has experienced sustained and resounding success in its 15-year history, consistently serving 8 to 10,000 K-12 students each year. Through successful partnerships with corporations, foundations and individuals this program thrives. Together we have made the Educational Outreach Program available to over 100,000 students from throughout southern California.

At a time when meaningful arts education in public schools is rare, *A Young Person's Guide to the Ballet* is more important than ever and makes the performing arts accessible to public, private and home school children in culturally diverse communities. More than 52 public school districts have participated in YPG. YPG is one of the most affordable educational outreach programs in the region, provides students with an introduction to a world of culture and tradition, which would be otherwise unavailable to them.

# Correlation to California Visual and Performing Arts: Dance Content Standards

## 1.0 Artistic Perception

*Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Dance*

A Young Person's Guide to the Ballet presents ballet to young people in a way that will have an enduring impact on their lives. IPB presents a high quality production that connects learning in the arts to movement and music. IPB performances provide opportunities for students to learn about ballet and classical music, and to observe dance movement in ballet. Performers and the Artistic Director use lecture and demonstration models to share dance techniques with students, and encourage students to observe and listen for these components within the program.

## 2.0 Creative Expression

*Creating, Performing, and Participating in Dance*

To introduce the featured ballet excerpt, dancers are brought on stage to demonstrate how they convey the story and express feelings through movement. Students then have a chance to try the techniques shared with them by the artists. During the lecture/demonstration by the Artistic Director, students are invited to "dance in their seats," with direction on what to do, but no music. Students learn a sequence of movements from the production and then perform the sequence again with the music.

## 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

*Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Dance*

Students are introduced to classical and contemporary ballet movement, as well as music and dances from around the world through IPB's varied repertoire. *The Nutcracker* includes music by Russian composer Peter Tchaikovsky and elements of Russian folk dance. Pre-performance comments include an introduction to the country of origin, the original literature, and how the traditions being represented in the performance relate to the students contemporary world. Students are encouraged to compare and contrast differences between their own dance traditions and those they are learning about.

## 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

*Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works of Dance*

Pre-visit background information is available this study guide and includes a composer biography, an introduction to basic ballet movements, dance vocabulary, and a review of theater etiquette. As students come into the theatre, they will see the stage curtains open and dancers warming up before they are in costume and without sets or stage lighting. They will also see some of the set pieces being moved onto the stage before the curtain closes. A post-performance question and answer session with the Artistic Director gives students an opportunity to ask questions about they have seen.

## **5.0 Connections, Relationship, Applications**

### *Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in Dance to Learning in Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers*

Students are exposed to high quality production values at IPB outreach performances. These include music, lighting, set design, costumes and special effects. The Artistic Director makes a point to discuss the fact that the music is specific for production. Though some productions use a live orchestra, IPB works with music engineers to produce recorded music for *The Nutcracker*. Students also learn that costumes, sets and lighting are specifically designed for each production, and often made in-house by highly skilled designers and artisans.

### **Connections to ELA, Social Science, and Science Standards**

While most pre activities are geared towards VAPA standards, many of the post activities reach across the curriculum to help reinforce Language Arts, Social Science and Science standards. The study guide includes ready to use black line masters that incorporate research based strategies including graphic organizers, and cloze activities.

## Ballet as an Art Form

### What is Dance?

Bending, stretching, jumping, and turning, are all activities dancers do; however, dancers work hard and long to transform these everyday movements into the language of dance. **Ballet** is distinctive from dance in that it requires a special **technique**, established almost 500 years ago, involving steps and body movements that are unique to this discipline.

The most striking feature of the technique is the **turnout** of the legs from the hip. This turnout enables ballet dancers to move to either side as well as forward and back with equal ease, giving them command over a full circle of movement. The dancer's turnout from the hips and strong frontal orientation of ballet staging can be traced to the European court tradition that directed the performance toward the sovereign in attendance.

Classical ballet technique and steps create modern ballets in a different way. The dancers wear simple leotards and tights and may dance in bare feet or soft slippers. In ballets where there is no story to follow, the audience's attention is drawn toward the shape and speed of the dancers' movements to the music. Some modern choreographers don't even use music; others may use song or speech to accompany their steps. Alvin Ailey, Twyla Tharp, and William Forsythe are modern choreographers who have used these methods.

### Other distinct dance styles include:

**Ethnic/Traditional:** Any dance form developed by a particular culture, like African, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Cuban, Hawaiian, etc.

**Jazz:** The truly American dance form. Originated in America, this form combines elements of African, modern, and ballet.

**Modern:** A dance form that originated around the turn of the century in both Europe and America. Isadora Duncan, known as the "mother of modern dance," began dancing barefoot and without the traditional ballet costumes as a rebellion against the constraints of ballet. Modern dance is based on the feet being parallel from the hips, rather than turned out as they are in ballet.

**Social:** Any dance form that people enjoy when they are gathered together. Ballroom dancing, street dancing, and folk dancing fit into this category.

**Tap:** Another distinctly American dance form, tap combines elements of jazz dance and borrows from the Irish jig and Dutch clogging.

## Basic Ballet Positions

**First Position:** The balls of the feet are turned out completely. The heels touch each other and the feet face outward, trying to form a straight line.

**Second Position:** The balls of both feet are turned out completely, with the heels separated by the length of one foot. Similar to first position, but the feet are spread apart.

**Third Position:** One foot is in front of the other with the front foot touching the middle of the back foot.

**Fourth Position:** The feet are placed the same as third position, but one step apart.

**Fifth Position:** With both feet touching, the toes of each foot reach the heel of the other.



**WEBLINK:** <http://video.about.com/dance/The-Five-Ballet-Positions.htm>

**Pirouette:** The pirouette, a spin around on one foot, is one of the most difficult of all dance steps. To do a pirouette, you must make a complete turn around yourself, while balancing on one foot. A pirouette may be performed en dehors (turning away from the supporting leg) or en dedans (turning toward the supporting leg). Pirouettes usually begin in fourth, fifth or second position.

**Bourree:** Bourree is a classical ballet movement in which the dancer glides across the floor on pointe or releve with tiny steps.

**Grand Jete:** In ballet, jete means to jump or leap, and grand simply means big, so a grand jete is a big leap.

**Pas de Deux:** Pas de Deux is French for "Step of Two" and is what partnering is called in ballet. By dancing with a partner the lady can jump higher, take positions she would never be able to on her own, and "float" about the stage as she is carried by her partner. A partner allows a man to extend his line and show off his strength.



## Ballet & Dance Vocabulary

**Abstraction** – An idea or concept conveyed through movement and removed from its original context.

**Aesthetic criteria** – Standards applied in making judgments about the artistic merit of a work.

**Axial movement** – Movement anchored to one spot by a body part. Movement is organized around the axis of the body and is not designed for travel from one location to another. Also known as nonlocomotor movement. Examples include stretching, bending, turning in place, gesturing.

**Accent** – A strong movement or gesture.

**Balance** – A state of equilibrium referring to the balance of weight or the spatial arrangement of bodies.

**Ballet** – A classical Western dance form that originated in the Renaissance courts of Europe. By the time of Louis XIV (mid-1600s), steps and body positions underwent codification.

**Ballerina** – A female ballet dancer of the highest ranking.

**Barre** – The place where a dancer goes to begin his/her class work. The barre is a long pole that gives the dancer support. After the dancer has done barre work to warm up, he/she will move to the center the classroom or studio to practice increasingly complex steps.

**Choreography** – ("dance writing") The creation and composition of dances by arranging or inventing steps, movements, and patterns of movements.

**Composer** – one who writes music.

**Corps de ballet** – A group of dancers who work together as an ensemble. They form the background for the ballerina and her partner and are the backbone of any ballet company.

**Dance Sequence** – The order in which a series of movements and shapes occurs.

**Divertissements** – Consist of a variety of short dances inserted in certain ballets as entertainment.

**Genre** – A particular kind or style of dance, such as ballet, jazz, modern, folk, tap.

**Gesture** – The movement of a body part or combination of parts, with emphasis on the expressive aspects of the move. It includes all movements of the body not supporting weight.

**Libretto** – The text on which a ballet is choreographed; the story of a ballet.

**Motif** – A distinctive and recurring gesture used to provide a theme or unifying idea.

**Pantomime** – The art of telling a story, expressing a mood or an emotion or describing an action without words.

**Partner and group skills** – Skills that require cooperation, coordination, and dependence, including imitation, lead and follow, echo, mirroring, and call and response.

**Pas de Deux** – a dance for two people, traditionally between a ballerina and the male dancer of the highest ranking.

**Phrasing** – The way in which the parts of a dance are organized.

**Pointe Shoes** – Shoes worn by female dancers that enable them to dance on the tips of their toes. The area covering the toe is made of layers of fabric glued together in the shape of a “box” covered in satin and hardened. The sole is made of hard leather to prevent the shoe from breaking when bent. To keep the shoes on tightly, the dancers sew satin ribbons and elastic to the sides and tie the ribbons securely around their ankles. A pair of pointe shoes may only last for 3 to 4 days of work.

**Rehearse** - to practice.

**Set Designer** – a person who creates the scenic design.

**Scenic design** – Like costumes and makeup, scenic design helps to tell the story or set the mood of the ballet. The set must be designed so that the dancer can enter and exit according to the choreographer’s wishes.

**Shape** – The positioning of the body in space: curved, straight, angular, twisted, symmetrical, or asymmetrical.

**Technique** – The physical skills of a dancer that enable him or her to execute the steps and movements required in different dances. Different styles or genres of dance often have specific techniques.

**Tempo** – The speed of music or a dance.

**Turnout** – The ability of the dancer to turn their feet and legs outward from the hip joints to close to a 180-degree position.

**Tutu** – Ballet skirt, usually made of net or tulle. Tutus may be of varying lengths. While the style and mood of the ballet help to determine the preferred tutu length, the dancer’s technique is most clearly visible when she wears a short tutu.

# Inland Pacific Ballet's Story of "The Nutcracker"

*(NOTE: Due to time limitations, outreach performances do not include the party scene from Act I. An abbreviated battle scene between the Nutcracker and Mouse King, plus all of Act II are included.*

## History

The Nutcracker has become the most popular ballet of our times. It was first presented in 1892 at the Maryinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, Russia. The ballet was an adaptation of the 1816 story by E. T. A. Hoffman, *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*. The Nutcracker was choreographed by Lev Ivanov with music by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Marius Petipa, the reigning choreographer at the Maryinsky, fell ill, so the job passed to Ivanov. Tchaikovsky only reluctantly accepted the commission to compose the score which, when completed, he considered "infinitely worse than 'Sleeping Beauty'." At the premiere, the ballet was deemed a complete failure. More than 60 years and many productions would pass before *The Nutcracker* would become a staple of the repertoire in ballet companies around the world and one of the universal traditions of the holiday season.

## Synopsis

### **ACT I**

Guests are arriving for a Christmas Eve party at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Stahlbaum and their children, Clara and Fritz. Clara's godfather, the eccentric Herr Drosselmeyer, arrives with toys for all the children and a mysterious vision of something special in store for Clara. With the party in progress, Drosselmeyer produces another wonderful surprise, life-size dolls, who dance to the children's delight. He then presents Clara with a special gift, a wooden nutcracker in the shape of a soldier, a strange gift for a little girl; but Clara falls in love with the doll and proudly shows it to everyone. Fritz, wanting the Nutcracker for himself, breaks the doll. Clara is heartbroken, but Drosselmeyer fixes the Nutcracker to everyone's relief.

As the party comes to an end, the Stahlbaum children are sent off to bed. Clara, however, is too excited to sleep, and she sneaks downstairs to be with her new Nutcracker doll. Strange things begin to happen. Huge mice almost as big as she, scurry across the floor. The clock strikes midnight and her whole house begins to transform. The Christmas tree grows to an enormous size, and a great battle ensues between the mice, led by the Mouse King, and the Nutcracker, now life-sized, leading an army of toy soldiers. It looks as though the Mouse King might win the battle when, just in time, Clara steps in and hits him with her shoe, distracting him so that the Nutcracker can kill him. The mice carry off their fallen leader. The Nutcracker transforms into a Prince and leads Clara on a fantastic journey, which begins with the wintry Kingdom of Snow. In the final tableau, the entire Snow Kingdom sends Clara on to the Sugar Plum Fairy's palace in the magical Land of the Sweets.

### **ACT II**

The scene opens in the palace of the Sugar Plum Fairy, where everyone is gathering to welcome Clara. As the Angels move about the palace, the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier meet Clara and the Nutcracker Prince and call all the characters to enter for a royal greeting. In the language of mime, the Nutcracker Prince describes to all assembled how the fearless Clara helped to win the battle with the Mouse King. Then the Sugar Plum Fairy arranges a great party with grand entertainment. Dancers from far away places like China, Spain, Arabia and Russia have come to perform for Clara. The Mirletons dance and Mother Ginger is there with her sixteen children! The Dew Drop Fairy leads the beautiful Waltz of the Flowers, and then the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier perform the most beautiful dance of all. Finally, all the characters gather to say goodbye to Clara and send her on her journey home.

## The Composer

(Social Studies 2.5)

### Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky 1840 - 1893



Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky was born in Kamsko-Votinsk, Russia on May 7, 1840. He was a very bright child who could read Russian, French and German by the time he was six years old. He also hated physical exercise, did not like to wash and didn't care about how he looked or what he wore. He showed an interest in music that was so strong for a young child that his governess worried about him. If he could not find a piano to try out the music he made up, he would use his fingers to tap out his tunes on the windowpanes of his house. One time while he was doing this he tapped so hard that he broke the glass of the window, and cut himself very badly.

Peter began taking piano lessons when he was six years old. After attending boarding school he studied law and mathematics and got a job as a clerk working in the Ministry of Justice. After just four years he quit his job to go to music school full time in order to study composition. He was soon invited to teach classes. Tchaikovsky was a nervous, unhappy man all his life, yet his beautiful music made him the most popular of all Russian composers.

He wrote the music for the three most famous ballets of all time, *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Sleeping Beauty*. In his lifetime he also wrote nine operas, six symphonies, four concertos, three string quartets, and numerous songs, suites, and overtures. One of his most famous pieces is the 1812 Overture, which uses cannons and church bells; because it sounds so grand it is often chose to accompany fireworks at 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations. Tchaikovsky was only 53 when he died in St. Petersburg in 1893. He had just completed his sixth symphony, which he felt was the best piece of music he ever created.

#### Web Links:

More on the Life of Tchaikovsky <http://www.balletmet.org/Notes/Tchaikovsky.html>

More About The Nutcracker History <http://www.nutcrackerballet.com/libretto.html>

1812 Overture <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkS9THHjp38&feature=related>

# Theatre Etiquette

Grade K – History/Social Studies: K.1-3.

Grade 3 – Dance: 2.6, 4.2

Grade 4 – Dance: 4.4

## General Information:

- The performance will begin promptly and lasts from 60-75 minutes.
- Let your children know in advance what behavior is expected of them. This is a LIVE performance. Unlike television or the movies, the people on stage are there at that moment and are dancing for the audience's pleasure. Any noise distracts them. The performance will be exciting, but let your children know that they will be required to sit quietly in their seats for a fairly long period of time.
- School clothes are appropriate dress, however, some children may choose to "dress up."
- Please plan to arrive to Bridges Auditorium at least 30 minutes prior to the performance, as latecomers cannot be seated once the performance has begun.
- 

## Once you arrive at the theatre, please....

- No food, drink, chewing gum, cameras or recording equipment is allowed inside the theatre. Please leave these items at home as we do not have provisions for storing these items at the theatre.
- It is important to accompany your children to the restrooms before the performance begins. It is inappropriate to visit the restrooms during a live performance, unless there is an emergency. Ushers will direct you to restrooms.
- We recommend that you provide your children with some guidelines of things to look and listen for during the performance. You may also want to encourage your children to add to the following list.

## Children should be encouraged to:

- a. Watch the dancers
- b. Listen to the music
- c. Look at the costumes and set designs
- d. Laugh when they see the dancers doing something funny
- e. Clap when the dancing has finished to show the dancers that they are enjoying the performance. It is customary to applaud when the dancers take a bow.

## Children should be encouraged not to:

- a. Talk or make noise because they might miss something important.
- b. Chew gum or eat because it is disruptive to others and makes a mess in the theatre.
- c. Leave their seats before the lights go on because this is very disruptive to their neighbors.
- d. Bring cameras, ipods, or headphones to the theatre because this is disruptive to the dancers and other members of the audience.

# Post-Performance Activities

(NOTE: Page numbers for blackline masters for reproduction are noted in parentheses.)

## Language Arts (19)

### Writing

Grades K-1 – Std 2.1

Have students write two sentences about what they liked best about the The Nutcracker story or ballet. Have them draw a picture to go with their writing.

### Writing

Grades 2-3 – Std 2.2

Have students write a friendly letter to one of the characters or dancers from the Nutcracker have students use sensory details to describe what they liked best about the character they chose.

## Language Arts: Compare/Contrast (22)

### Reading

K - Std 2.3, Grade 1 – Std. 2.6

Grade 3-4 – Std 3.2

### Literary Response and Analysis

Grades 2 – Std. 3.1

1.) Read a different version of the Nutcracker aloud to your students. The version of the The Nutcracker that you have read is slightly different from what students saw in the ballet. Have students chart the differences they notice on a Venn diagram or other graphic organizer. Depending on the grade level, have your students use their or graphic organizer to write compare and contrast sentences, paragraph(s) or an essay.

### Literary Response and Analysis

Grades 1-2 – Std. 3.1, Grade 3 Std 3.2,

Grade 4 Std 3.2,3.4. Grade 6 – Std 3.4

### Writing Applications

Grades 5, 7, 9-12 - Std 2.2

2.) Have students compare The Nutcracker with another folk tale, fairy tale or story they have read or are familiar with. Students may compare and contrast the two stories from any of a variety of angles; transformation, dream, journey, recurring characters, the problem, the resolution, etc. Use a Venn diagram other graphic organizer to record similarities and differences. Use the graphic organizer as pre writing to then write sentences, a paragraph, or an essay.

## Language Arts: Parts of Speech Activity

Written and Oral English Language Conventions

Grades 2 - Std 1.3

Grades 3 - Std 1.4

Select one part of speech for students to act out every time it occurs in a read aloud of *The Nutcracker*. (i.e. nouns, or verbs, or adjectives, or adverbs.) Nouns and an introduction to adjectives are particularly good for Grade 2. Verbs and an introduction to adjectives and adverbs are useful for Grade 3. Nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are all excellent for Grade 4.

**Language Arts: Cloze Passage (23)**

Reading

Grade 3 – Std 1.3, Grade 4 – Std 1.2

Grade 5 – 1.2,2.2, Grade 6, 7, 8, Std 1.3

Use the “fill in the blank” passage as a comprehension exercise. This can be done together as a class for younger or primary grades. A variety of additional tasks can be built into this one exercise. Variation #1: Parts of speech – students can underline each example of a specified part of that occur in the passage speech (i.e. all of the nouns, verbs, etc.). Variation #2: Synonyms and Antonyms - Students may provide either a synonym or an antonym for each example of a specific part of speech. (i.e. verbs, adjectives, adverbs) to create a more vivid description. Variation #3: Syllables – Have students underline all words in the passage that have 2 syllables, etc. (Grade 3 &up)

**Language Arts: Nutcracker Mad Lib (25)**

Written and Oral English Language Conventions

Grades 2, 4, 7, 9, 10 - Std. 1.3

Grades 3, 5, 6 - Std. 1.2, 1.4

Grades 11-12 - Std 1.1

Students are given a synopsis of The Nutcracker story and then are asked to create their own version, replacing designated words with new grammatically correct words. Students can be assigned to create a specific genre, i.e. scary, silly, fantasy, or left to their own choice.

## **Social Studies & Language Arts (21)** **Change the Setting for the Nutcracker**

### **Social Studies**

Standards - K.4, K.6, 1.4, 2.1, 4.1)

### **Language Arts**

#### Literary Response and Analysis

Grades 1-2 – Std. 3.1, Grade 3 Std 3.2,

Grade 4 Std 3.2,3.4. Grade 6 – Std 3.4

#### Writing Applications

Grades 5, 7, 9-12 - Std 2.2

1.) For this production of The Nutcracker, the ballet had been set in Western Europe in the 1800s. Have students write about what would happen if the story took place in a different time period and a different location. What would you change? (Costumes, sets, characters, folk dances, music, landmarks, locations, events, animals, etc.) For Grades K-1, teachers can record responses on a graphic organizer. For Grade 4 students, change the setting to California.

2.) Have students re-write their own version of the story using a different setting, time period, or both be sure that they consider how costumes, sets, characters, folk dances, music, landmarks, locations, events, and animals might be different.

## **Social Studies: Families & Traditions (20)**

### **Social Studies**

K6-3, Grade 1- Std. 1.4, Grade 2 – std 2.1

Grade 3 3.1(1) Grade 5 – Std 5.5(2)

The Nutcracker story takes place at Christmas and shows how Clara's family celebrates the holiday. What holiday traditions are special to your family? Use a Venn diagram or other graphic organizer to compare and contrast your holiday traditions with your parents or guardian. How is it different from your grandparents?

## **Social Studies: Climate (18-19)**

### **Social Studies**

Grade 1 Std 1.2(4)

Does the snowflake scene in The Nutcracker remind you of winter? How would people dress in this kind of weather? What would people do in this kind of weather? Draw a picture of how you would dress in this weather, then write a few sentences about how this is different or the same from the way you dress in your climate.



## **Science: Habitat**

### **Science**

Grade 4 – Std 2a, 2b, 3a, 3c, 5b, Grade 6 5e

Have students consider the Dance of the Snowflakes scene in The Nutcracker. Discuss what animals they might find living in this kind of habitat? What else would you likely find living in this habitat (plants, trees, insects, etc.)? Have students record their ideas on a graphic organizer and draw pictures to go along with it.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Climate (1 of 2)

Grades Pre-K - 3 (Social Studies: 1.2)



Does the snowflake scene in *The Nutcracker* remind you of winter? How would people dress in this kind of weather? What would people do in this kind of weather? Draw a picture of how you would dress in this weather, then write a few sentences about how this is different or the same from the way you dress in your climate.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Climate (2 of 2)



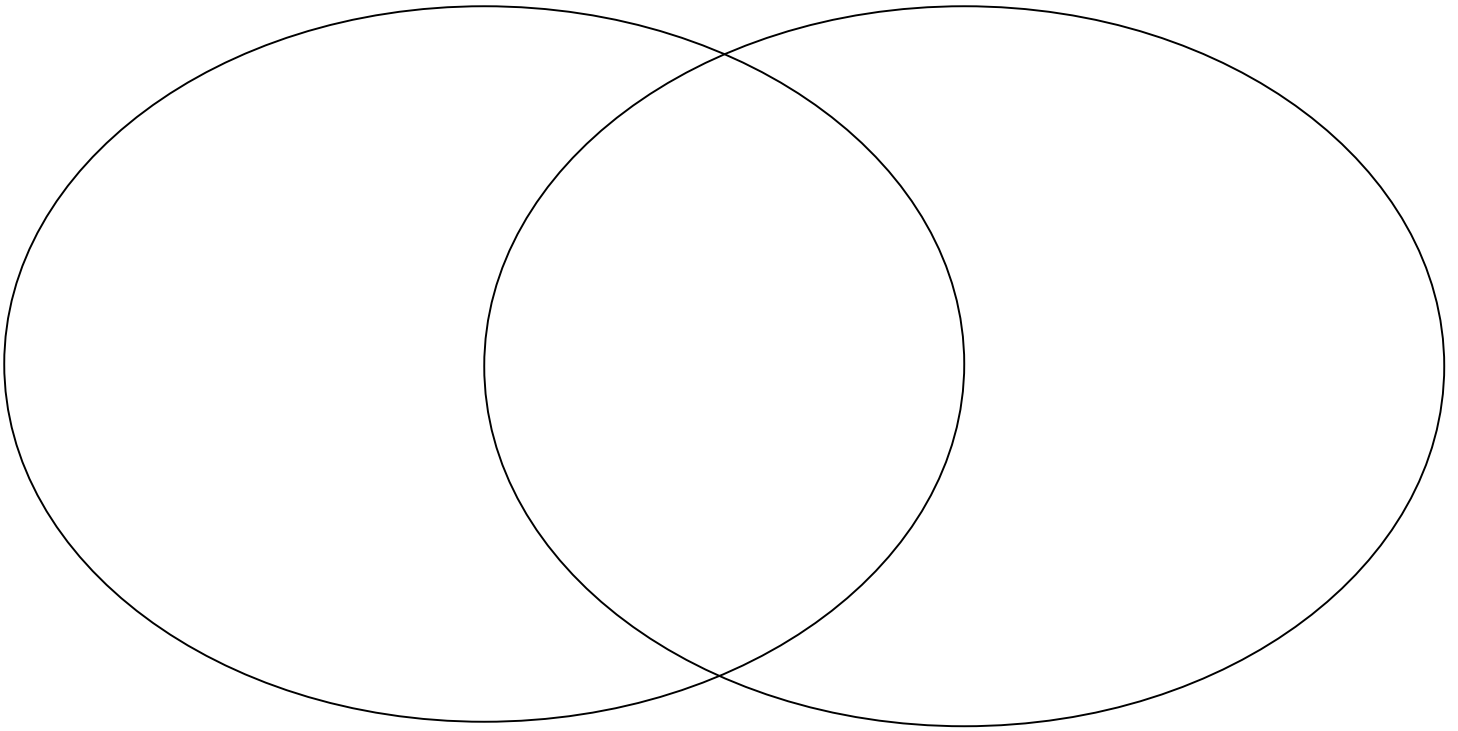
Handwriting practice area consisting of 10 sets of horizontal lines. Each set includes a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Nutcracker: Compare and Contrast Venn Diagram



\_\_\_\_\_



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Nutcracker: Act I: The Adventure Begins

Grades 1-8, with variety 9-12 –  
Language Arts Written and Oral Language Conventions 1.2, 1.3, 1.7,  
Grade 3 – Reading 1.0

Fill in the blanks with the words from the Word Bank below.

Clara's \_\_\_\_\_ begin to shake and she wakes up to find that the Christmas tree has come to life and the \_\_\_\_\_ has grown. Other toys have also come to life and an \_\_\_\_\_ group of mice enter the room. The horrible \_\_\_\_\_ challenges the Nutcracker to fight, but Clara saves the Nutcracker by conquering the Mouse King with her \_\_\_\_\_. The Nutcracker is transformed into a \_\_\_\_\_ who takes Clara on a fantastic \_\_\_\_\_ where they encounter the snowflakes and the \_\_\_\_\_ with whom they dance. The Snow Queen gives them a beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ that will carry Clara and the Nutcracker to see the \_\_\_\_\_ in the Land of the Sweets.

### WORD BANK

<i>Mouse King</i>	<i>pillows</i>	<i>Clara</i>	<i>magical</i>
<i>evil</i>	<i>Snow Queen</i>	<i>shoe</i>	<i>Sugar Plum Fairy</i>
<i>Nutcracker</i>	<i>sleigh</i>	<i>Prince</i>	<i>journey</i>

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## Habitat

Grade 4 & 6 (Science: 4th: 2a, 2b, 3a, 3c, 5b; 6th: 5e)



Consider the Dance of the Snowflakes scene in *The Nutcracker*. What animals might you find living in this kind of habitat? What else would you likely find living in this habitat (plants, trees, insects, etc.)? Write your ideas below, and draw a picture on the reverse of this worksheet.

LESSON EXTENSION: Check this web site to see if your predictions were true and find out what you might have missed. <http://www.blueplanetbiomes.org/alpine.htm>



## Nutcracker Mad Lib

Read the following synopsis of The Nutcracker story.

It is Christmas Eve long ago at the home of the Stahlbaum family. Everyone is excited for the arrival of the mysterious Drosselmeyer, the famous toy and clock maker. All eyes turn to the door when Drosselmeyer arrives. He brings with him very unique creations from his workshop to entertain the guests, and a special present for Clara, a Nutcracker doll. Clara's brother Fritz is jealous of her present and accidentally breaks it. After the party Clara sneaks down to find her Nutcracker doll and suddenly the Christmas tree and all the toys under it grow to gigantic proportions. The mice fight with the soldiers and the Nutcracker doll becomes a Prince who defends Clara from the Mouse King. Winning the battle, the Nutcracker Prince then takes Clara through the Kingdom of Snow to the Land of the Sweets where the Sugar Plum Fairy reigns. Everyone welcomes Clara including Spanish, Arabian, Chinese, and Russian dancers followed by fragrant Flowers. Finally, the Sugar Plum Fairy dances with her Cavalier. Grateful for the magnificent dancing in their honor, Clara and the Nutcracker Prince thank the Sugar Plum Fairy and Cavalier and then bid them farewell.



Now, on a separate sheet of paper, make up your own version of this holiday tale, by placing a new word in each blank. Share and enjoy your own version!

It is Christmas Eve long ago at the **NOUN** of the Stahlbaum family. Everyone is excited for the arrival of the **ADJ**. Drosselmeyer, the famous **NOUN** and **NOUN** maker. All **PLURAL NOUN** turn to the **NOUN** when Drosselmeyer **VERB**. He brings with him very **ADJ** creations from his **NOUN** to entertain the **PLURAL NOUN**, and a special **NOUN** for Clara, a Nutcracker **NOUN**. Clara's brother Fritz is jealous of her **NOUN** and accidentally breaks it. After the party Clara sneaks down to find her Nutcracker **NOUN** and suddenly the **PROPER NOUN** tree and all the **PLURAL NOUN** under it grow to **ADJ** proportions. The **PLURAL NOUN** fight with the **PLURAL NOUN** and the Nutcracker doll becomes a Prince and defends Clara from the Mouse **NOUN**. Winning the **NOUN**, the Nutcracker Prince then takes Clara through the Kingdom of **NOUN** to the Land of the **NOUN**, where the Sugar Plum Fairy reigns. Everyone welcomes Clara including Spanish, Arabian, Chinese, and **PROPER NOUN** dancers followed by **PLURAL NOUN**. Finally the Sugar Plum Fairy dances with her **PROPER NOUN**. Grateful for the magnificent **VERB-ING** in their honor, Clara and the Nutcracker Prince **VERB** the Sugar Plum Fairy and Cavalier and then **VERB** them farewell.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Dance Match-Up

There are many different types of dance. Can you match the pictures with the name for each style? Draw a line between the name and the picture. Circle the picture of the type of dance you have seen.



Ballet



Hip Hop Dance



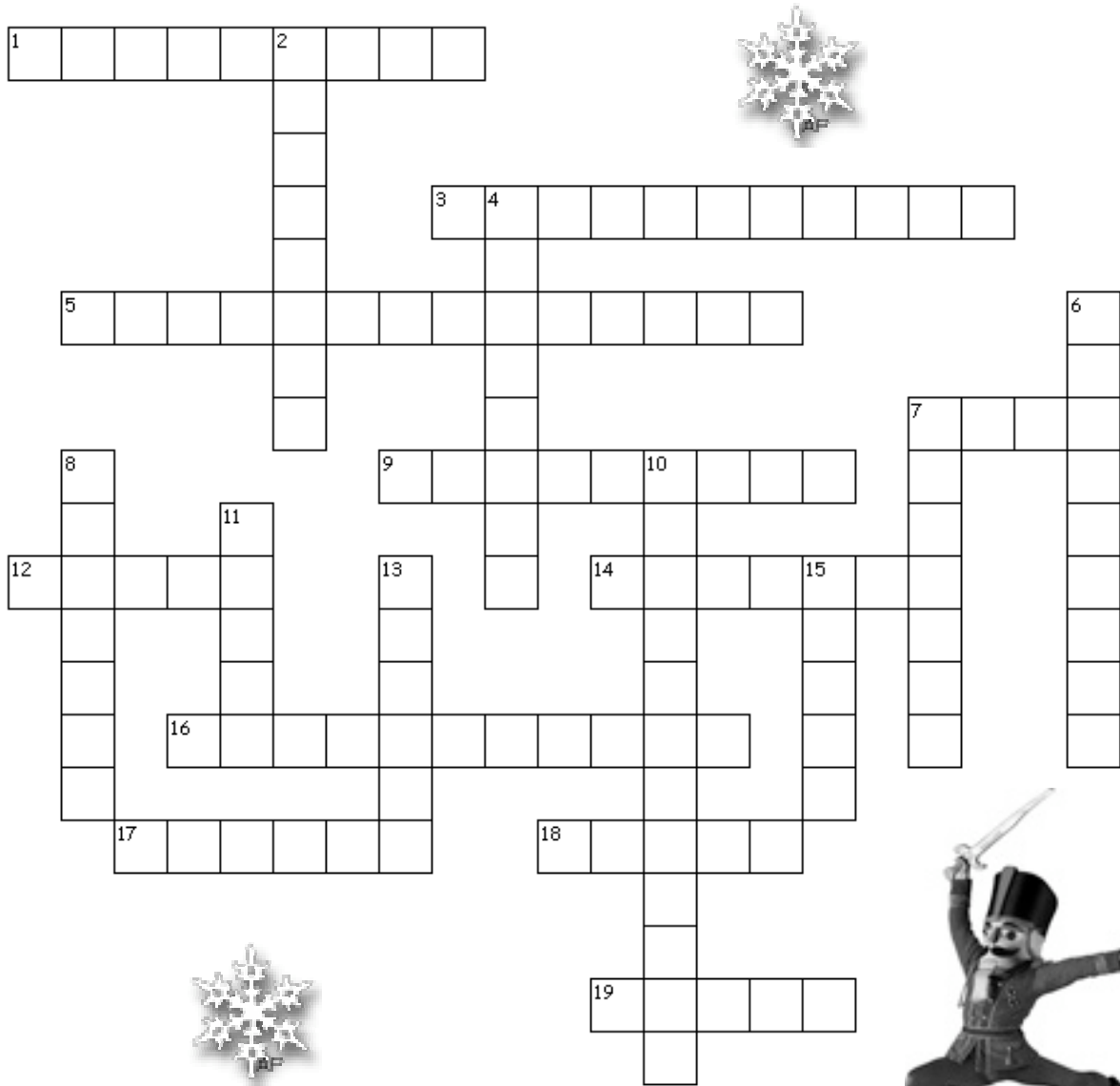
Ballroom Dancing



Square Dancing



## The Nutcracker Ballet Crossword Puzzle



**Across**

- 1. a female ballet dancer
- 3. The Nutcracker music composer
- 5. her palace is in the Land of the Sweets
- 7. a ballet skirt
- 9. a dance for two people
- 12. receives the nutcracker doll
- 14. creator of the nutcracker story
- 16. a person who creates the scenic design
- 17. a classical Western dance form
- 18. the speed of music or a dance
- 19. a particular style of dance

**Down**

- 2. to practice dance or music
- 4. one who writes music
- 6. battles with the nutcracker
- 7. the ability of the dancer to turn their feet and legs outward
- 8. a state of equilibrium
- 10. gives the nutcracker doll
- 11. a long pole which gives the dancer support
- 13. a strong movement or gesture
- 15. a distinctive and recurring gesture

### The Nutcracker Ballet – Word Search

T K E E E S R A E H E R Y T X M U J Y N  
R E K C A R C T U N E Y H C U O W T C J  
E S L Z N C G M E Y U C P H E U B W U M  
I M E L T A T E E M O N A A D S A O Y T  
P S I T A L L M N M R A R I E E R N T K  
A F L M D B L A P R I M G K D K R S O T  
C P T X O E E O B G E F O O S I E S E E  
O Y C U S T S D Q E F F E V A N J L M R  
Z E H S G E N I S E Z O R S P G L O A B  
H I O J R D T A G P C H O K S A T J M B  
V R A R A L C H P N R I H Y B I T E D I  
D B A L L E R I N A E O C O F S Z Q D N  
P O I N T E S H O E S R C K G A X D L Q  
X Y R I A F M U L P R A G U S T E M P O

BALANCE

BALLERINA

BALLET

BARRE

CHOREOGRAPHY

CLARA

COMPOSER

CORPS DE BALLET

DROSSELMEYER

GENRE

HOFFMAN

MOTIF

MOUSE KING

NUTCRACKER

PANTOMIME

PAS DE DEUX

POINTE SHOES

REHEARSE

SET DESIGNER

SNOW

SUGAR PLUM FAIRY

TCHAIKOVSKY

TEMPO

TUTU

## Additional Resources

- Hayden, Melissa. The Nutcracker Ballet. Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1992.
- Hautzig, Deborah. The Story of the Nutcracker Ballet New York: Random House, 1986
- Newman, Barbara. The Illustrated Book of Ballet Stories. Bolton: Fenn Publishing Company, Ltd., 1997
- Tennant, Veronica. The Nutcracker. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985.
- Vagin, Vladimir. The Nutcracker Ballet. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1995
- Whitehead, Pat. The Nutcracker, 1988

## Online Resources

- Inland Pacific Ballet [www.ipballet.org](http://www.ipballet.org)
- VIDEO: Inland Pacific Ballet - The Nutcracker #1  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPSRXKvOv9s>
- VIDEO: Inland Pacific Ballet - The Nutcracker #2  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15Uy9nnRE7g&feature=related>
- Animated Movie for Children – Tom & Jerry: A Nutcracker Tale  
<http://www.theonlydevice.com/tom-and-jerry-a-nutcracker-tale/>
- "Telling A Story Through Dance" Lesson Plan  
<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/2347>
- Nutcracker Activity & Coloring Sheets  
<http://themes.pppst.com/nutcracker.html>
- Music Web Quest <http://www.oswego.edu/~kinney/webquest/index.htm>
- NYC Ballet - Sample Lesson Plan for The Nutcracker  
<http://www.nycballet.com/nutcracker/intro/sample-lesson.html>
- PBS Royal Ballet Lesson Plans for Teachers  
[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/education/plan\\_nutcracker\\_overview.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/education/plan_nutcracker_overview.html)

## References

- California Department of Education - Content Standards & Framework  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>
- San Francisco Ballet – Activity Guide for Adults & Children  
<http://www.sfballet.org/>
- New York City Ballet Study Guide for *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*<sup>TM</sup>  
<http://www.nycballet.com/nutcracker/intro/study-guide.html>
- Grant, Gail. Technical Manual and Dictionary of Classical Ballet (Third revised edition), Dover Publications, 1967/1982.