



How to create your own dance unit

Choose a Theme

The first thing to do is choose a theme for the dance you plan on delivering. The theme can relate to any topic you like. Below are some suggestions:

- For younger year groups themes could include.....topic currently being studied in class, a film, a period in time
- For older year groups more general topics such as street dance, Bollywood, sporting dances e.g. the Haka may be more suitable

In this document we will use Peter Pan as an example theme

Create the story

Once you have a theme it is important to provide a week by week structure to the dance, create a story or framework that fits the theme you have chosen. This can relate to the story you have chosen for the dance or relate to dance ideas you want to incorporate each week e.g. levels, cannoning, moods and feelings

In the Peter Pan example:

The basic story to be covered in this dance is:

- Week 1: Peter meets Wendy
- Week 2: Fly off to Neverland
- Week 3: Peter meets Captain Hook
- Week 4: Lost Boys v Pirates
- Week 5: Leaving Neverland
- Week 6: Practice and Perform

In any dance unit the last week should be an opportunity for the children to perform the dance which they have created

Choose a track for the dance

The next step is to choose music for the theme and story you have chosen. This can be a single track or can involve using a few different tracks linked together

Peter Pan example: this dance uses several different tracks

- Peter meets Wendy & Fly off to Neverland – Flying (from the Peter Pan soundtrack)
- Peter meets Captain Hook & Lost Boys v Pirates – Set Them Free (from the Peter Pan soundtrack)
- Leaving Neverland – Peter Returns (from the Peter Pan soundtrack)

These songs can be mixed together to create one dance track or have each track ready to stop and start as necessary

Prepare Resources

Prepare a range of resources that can be used to help set the scene for the children and tell the story of the dance. A range of stimuli such as pictures; videos, poems, objects that relate to the topic

Peter Pan example: this can include images from the internet (see example below); watching the film; reading the book

Creative section:

Each week the children will be asked to create their own actions that tell the story of that section of the dance. In the outline below these are called 'Creative Sections'. It is important that you give structure to these sections and give the children guidance on what they should focus on in each one.



The table below gives some examples of themes you could use and who they would be appropriate for. This is not an exhaustive list and other ideas can be used as appropriate

Theme	Definition	Year Group
Levels	Level actions are performed on – high, middle, low	All years
Expressions	Using the face to show the emotions of the dance/story	All years
Beats of 8	Understanding the timing of the music – the count of 8	All years
Directions	Making use of the space available, moving in different directions along different pathways	All years
Freezes	Holding positions, shapes at appropriate times in the story	All years
Speed	Performing actions at different speeds within the dance e.g. double time, 2 actions to 1 beat	All years
Performance	Explaining the key messages to giving a good performance – timing, quality of actions, being in character, looking up – engaging with the audience	All years
Cannon	Actions/movements that are performed one person after another	KS2
Group work	Creating routines in small groups; cooperation	KS2
Question and Answer	When someone/group performs a movement and this is then responded to by someone else/another group	Upper KS2
Formation	Moving in set ways as part of a group	Upper KS2

Once you have this outline it is quite straight forward to deliver a dance unit on any topic to your class

Below is a guide of how you could structure lessons week by week with a Peter Pan theme used as an example.



Lesson 1 – Introducing the Dance




Objectives

Choose suitable objectives from the Dance unit of work that meet the theme of the lesson

Introduction and warm up

What is dance?	<p>Introduce the theme of the dance</p> <p>Ask the children if they have any reference to the topic e.g. seen the film or read the book?</p>
<p>The beat of 8</p> <p>Warm-up</p>	<p>Introduce the Beat: Explain that within dance you move and count to the beat of 8</p> <p>Suggested activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the children to clap and then nod the count of 8 to the music • Ask the children to think of 8 different ways they can move around the room in time with the 8 count • Get the children to move around the room in one of these ways for a count of 8, then freeze in a position for a count of 8 • Repeat the activity moving around the room in different ways to counts of 8 and freezing to counts of 8

Introducing the stimuli and dance theme

<p>Introduce the stimuli for the dance e.g. pictures, poems, objects, and discuss the theme.</p>	<p>Introduce the stimuli: Aim to get the children thinking about the theme of the dance and how this can be made into a routine</p> <p>Peter Pan example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pin a number of pictures from peter pan on the board with different key parts of the story relating to the week by week themes. Below are three photos, Wendy flying to Neverland with Peter, Captain Hook fighting Peter Pan and the Lost Boys and Peter saying goodbye <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">    </div> <p>Talk about the story, what are the key parts of the story?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the different characters and their role within the story • Discuss how those characters move and act, and choose dance words to reflect their movements. Use this discussion to create key words for the dance • These pictures and key words can be used as a reminder each week
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Start of the routine

<p>This is an opportunity for the children explore and create dance phrases for themselves</p> <p>Select a Theme</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Beat of 8</p>	<p>Creativity section: Allow the children to discover dance, developing their own ideas and expressing themselves whilst telling the story of the dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Peter meets Wendy Theme: Beat of 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The children are to create a routine that shows Peter meeting Wendy for the first time – 16 counts• Play the section of the music they will be creating the dance to• Show the children the video when Peter first meets Wendy, talk through the movements and the expressions they see• Give the children an example of how they could perform this part of the dance and ask them to perform it:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Swaying side to side pretending to look out - 2 counts- Turn - 2 counts- Giving a shocked look, turn and look at your partner - 2 counts- Shake hands - 2 counts- In unison perform a star jump - 2 counts- In unison perform a pencil jump - 2 counts- Kneel down on one knee slowly lifting your arm to show the way to Neverland - 4 counts• Working in pairs ask the children to devise a 16 count routine of Peter and Wendy meeting for the first time• Get the children to practice this part of the dance:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Without the music, with you- With the music, with you- With the music, on their own
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Warm down and Plenary

Warm down: a suitable activity that incorporates stretching and slow movements, to cool the body and calm the mind

Plenary: questioning relating to the objectives selected for the lesson



Lesson 2

Objectives

Choose suitable objectives from the Dance unit of work that meet the theme of the lesson

Recap and warm up

Recap of the dance so far	<p>Recall last weeks dance routine: Remind the children of the story and the movements they learnt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk through the pictures from peter pan; who are the characters? What parts of the story are we focusing on? What music were we listening to? Show them the key words that they created• Ask the children to count the beat of 8 with you <p>Warm Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select a warm-up activity that mobilises the joints and prepares the body for activity (see warm up ideas)• Discuss why warming up is important• What affects does this have on the body?
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Recap dance + Development

Recap and develop the dance Highlight ideas/issues that were brought up last week	<p>Recap the dance Give the children the chance to perform all the sections of the dance they have created so far</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the stimuli and words to prompt the children <p>Peter Pan example: - Peter meets Wendy</p>
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Creative section

<p>This is an opportunity for the children to explore and create dance phrases for themselves</p> <p>Select the count for this section e.g. 16 / 32</p> <p>Select a Theme</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Introduction of levels</p>	<p>Creativity section: Allow the children to discover dance, developing their own ideas and expressing themselves whilst telling the story of the next part of the dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Fly off to Neverland Theme: Levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss the different levels that can be used in dance<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. High2. Medium3. Low• Encourage the children to think of examples of how they can move onto these levels• Progression: Discuss the different widths that can be added to our movements<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wide2. Tall <p>Peter Pan example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show the children the stimuli for this part of the dance• Play the section of the music they will be creating the dance to
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	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On their own, the children must create a routine imagining they were following Peter and Wendy to Neverland making use of different levels• Get the children to practice this part of the dance:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Without the music, with you- With the music, with you- With the music, on their own <p>Give the children the opportunity to demonstrate their work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Split the class into two groups – Performers and Audience• The Performers perform their routine to the audience• The audience gives feedback – focus on positives and areas that could be improved• The groups swap roles and repeat
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Put the Dance together

Put together all sections of the dance that have created so far	<p>It is important to keep putting the sections of the dance together as they are created and giving the children the opportunity to perform the whole dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Perform – Peter meets Wendy and Flying off to Neverland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get the children to practice:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Without the music, with you- With the music, with you- With the music, on their own
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Warm down and Plenary

Warm down: a suitable activity that incorporates stretching and slow movements, to cool the body and calm the mind

Plenary: questioning relating to the objectives selected and theme chosen for the lesson



Lesson 3

Objectives

Choose suitable objectives from the Dance unit of work that meet the theme of the lesson


Recap and warm up

<p>Recap last weeks section of the dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Flying off to Neverland</p>	<p>Recall last weeks dance routine: Remind the children of the story and the movements they learnt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk through the pictures from peter pan; who are the characters? What parts of the story are we focusing on? What music were we listening to? Show them the key words that they created• Ask the children to count the beat of 8 with you <p>Warm Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select a warm-up activity that mobilises the joints and prepares the body for activity (see warm up ideas)• Discuss why warming up is important• What affects does this have on the body?
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Recap the dance so far

<p>Recap and develop the dance</p> <p>Highlight ideas/issues that were brought up last week</p>	<p>Recap the dance Give the children the chance to perform all the sections of the dance they have created so far</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the stimuli and words to prompt the children <p>Peter Pan example: - Peter meets Wendy; Flying off to Neverland</p>
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Creative section

<p>This is an opportunity for the children explore and create dance phrases for themselves</p> <p>Select the count for this section e.g. 16 / 32</p> <p>Select a Theme</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Moods and Feelings</p>	<p>Creativity section: Allow the children to discover dance, developing their own ideas and expressing themselves whilst telling the story of the next part of the dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Peter meets Captain Hook Theme: Moods and Feelings</p> <p>Moods and Feelings: In dance it is important to use movements and facial expressions to show the emotions of the different characters at different times through the story</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the children how both Peter and Captain Hook might feel the first time they meet, write these as key words on the board
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working in pairs, one child playing the role of Peter Pan and the other as Captain Hook, create a 32 count dance of what happens when they meet for the first time. Emphasise the importance of showing the moods and feelings of each character• Get the children to practice this part of the dance:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Without the music, with you- With the music, with you- With the music, on their own <p>Give the children the opportunity to show their work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Split the class into two groups – Performers and Audience• The Performers perform their routine to the audience• The audience gives feedback – focus on positives and areas that could be improved• The groups swap roles and repeat
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Put the Dance together

Put together all sections of the dance that have created so far	<p>It is important to keep putting the sections of the dance together as they are created and giving the children the opportunity to perform the whole dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Perform – Peter meets Wendy; Flying off to Neverland and Peter meets Captain Hook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get the children to practice:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Without the music, with you- With the music, with you- With the music, on their own
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Warm down and Plenary

Warm down: a suitable activity that incorporates stretching and slow movements, to cool the body and calm the mind

Plenary: questioning relating to the objectives selected and theme chosen for the lesson



Lesson 4

Objectives

Choose suitable objectives from the Dance unit of work that meet the theme of the lesson


Recap and warm up

<p>Recap last weeks section of the dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Peter meets Captain Hook</p>	<p>Recall last weeks dance routine: Remind the children of the story and the movements they learnt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk through the pictures from Peter Pan; who are the characters? What parts of the story are we focusing on? What music were we listening to? Show them the key words that they created• Ask the children to count the beat of 8 with you <p>Warm Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select a warm-up activity that mobilises the joints and prepares the body for activity (see warm up ideas)• Discuss why warming up is important• What affects does this have on the body?
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Recap the dance so far

<p>Recap and develop the dance</p> <p>Highlight ideas/issues that were brought up last week</p>	<p>Recap the dance Give the children the chance to perform all the sections of the dance they have created so far</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the stimuli and words to prompt the children <p>Peter Pan example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Peter meets Wendy; Flying off to Neverland and Peter meets Captain Hook
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Creative section

<p>This is an opportunity for the children explore and create dance phrases for themselves</p> <p>Select the count for this section e.g. 16 / 32</p> <p>Select a Theme</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Group Work</p>	<p>Creativity section: Allow the children to discover dance, developing their own ideas and expressing themselves whilst telling the story of the next part of the dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Lost Boys v Pirates Theme: Group Work</p> <p>Group Work: working together, cooperating to create a dance routine as part of a group. Things to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is everyone's role?• How are you going to perform e.g. unison, canon 
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working in groups of 6 (3 Lost Boys and 3 Pirates), the children create a 32 count dance routine of the Lost Boys doing battle with the Pirates• Progression: encourage groups to think of levels and directions when creating this section (or other suitable dance themes)• Get the children to practice this part of the dance:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Without the music, with you- With the music, with you- With the music, on their own <p>Give the children the opportunity to demonstrate their work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Split the class into two groups – Performers and Audience• The Performers perform their routine to the audience• The audience gives feedback – focus on positives and areas that could be improved• The groups swap roles and repeat
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Put the Dance together

Put together all sections of the dance that have created so far	<p>It is important to keep putting the sections of the dance together as they are created and giving the children the opportunity to perform the whole dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Perform – Peter meets Wendy; Flying off to Neverland; Peter meets Captain Hook and The Lost Boys v the Pirates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get the children to practice:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Without the music, with you- With the music, with you- With the music, on their own
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Warm down and Plenary

Warm down: a suitable activity that incorporates stretching and slow movements, to cool the body and calm the mind

Plenary: questioning relating to the objectives selected and theme chosen for the lesson



Lesson 5

Objectives

Choose suitable objectives from the Dance unit of work that meet the theme of the lesson


Recap and warm up

<p>Recap last weeks section of the dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Lost Boys v the Pirates</p>	<p>Recall last weeks dance routine: Remind the children of the story and the movements they learnt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk through the pictures from Peter Pan; who are the characters? What parts of the story are we focusing on? What music were we listening to? Show them the key words that they created• Ask the children to count the beat of 8 with you <p>Warm Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select a warm-up activity that mobilises the joints and prepares the body for activity (see warm up ideas)• Discuss why warming up is important• What affects does this have on the body?
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Recap the dance so far

<p>Recap and develop the dance</p> <p>Highlight ideas/issues that were brought up last week</p>	<p>Recap the dance Give the children the chance to perform all the sections of the dance they have created so far</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the stimuli and words to prompt the children <p>Peter Pan example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Peter meets Wendy; Flying off to Neverland; Peter meets Captain Hook and The Lost Boys v the Pirates
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Creative section

<p>This is an opportunity for the children explore and create dance phrases for themselves</p> <p>Select the count for this section e.g. 16 / 32</p> <p>Select a Theme</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Expressions</p>	<p>Creativity section: Allow the children to discover dance, developing their own ideas and expressing themselves whilst telling the story of the next part of the dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Leaving Neverland Theme: Expressions</p> <p>Expressions: in dance, actions movements and expressions should tell the emotion of the story. Explain that one of the most powerful ways to show emotions is through facial expression</p> <p>Ask the children to show different emotions with their expression: happy, sad, angry, worried</p> 
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	<p>Discuss with the children how Peter and Wendy would feel saying goodbye to their new friends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working in groups with Peter, Wendy and some of the Lost Boys as characters create a routine where everyone says goodbye and Peter and Wendy leave Neverland• Get the children to practice this part of the dance:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Without the music, with you- With the music, with you- With the music, on their own <p>Give the children the opportunity to demonstrate their work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Split the class into two groups – Performers and Audience• The Performers perform their routine to the audience• The audience gives feedback – focus on positives and areas that could be improved• The groups swap roles and repeat
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Put the Dance together

Put together all sections of the dance that have created so far	<p>It is important to keep putting the sections of the dance together as they are created and giving the children the opportunity to perform the whole dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Perform – Peter meets Wendy; Flying off to Neverland; Peter meets Captain Hook; The Lost Boys v the Pirates and Leaving Neverland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get the children to practice:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Without the music, with you- With the music, with you- With the music, on their own
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Warm down and Plenary

Warm down: a suitable activity that incorporates stretching and slow movements, to cool the body and calm the mind

Plenary: questioning relating to the objectives selected and theme chosen for the lesson



Lesson 6

Objectives

Choose suitable objectives from the Dance unit of work that meet the theme of the lesson

Recap and warm up

<p>Recap last weeks section of the dance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Leaving Neverland</p>	<p>Recall last weeks dance routine: Remind the children of the story and the movements they learnt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk through the pictures from Peter Pan; who are the characters? What parts of the story are we focusing on? What music were we listening to? Show them the key words that they created• Ask the children to count the beat of 8 with you <p>Warm Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select a warm-up activity that mobilises the joints and prepares the body for activity (see warm up ideas)• Discuss why warming up is important• What affects does this have on the body?
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Creative section - Rehearsal

<p>Practice and rehearse the dance that has been created</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Performance</p>	<p>Creativity section: The children are going to perform the dance at the end of the lesson. Discuss what performance means and what makes a good performance</p> <p>Peter Pan example: Practice the whole dance Theme: Performance</p> <p>Performance: Discuss the importance of carrying out a 'performance':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you need to think about when performing?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Giving the best performance you can- All the areas you have covered in the unit, the importance of - timing, remembering the parts of the dance- Characters - it is important to act like the character you are portraying - move in the way they would e.g. at the speed and level they would- Expressions - are important in dance, they are used to express the feelings of the performance- Engaging with the audience• Practice the dance with the children using the steps that have been followed before:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Without the music, with you- With the music, with you- With the music, on their own• Spend time and focus on areas/elements that can be improved <p>Give the children the opportunity to demonstrate their work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Split the class into two groups – Performers and Audience• The Performers perform their routine to the audience• The audience gives feedback – focus on positives and areas that could be improved• The groups swap roles and repeat
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The Performance

Give a final Performance of the dance

It is important the children are given the opportunity to perform the dance they have created. This can be done in several ways:

- Invite another class in to watch the final performance of the dance
- Perform the dance in a school assembly - the available space is an important consideration here, is there room for everyone to sit and watch and for the children still perform as they have practiced?
- Record the final performance so it can be watched back by the children themselves, other classes in school or in an assembly
- Split the class in half and one group performs as the other acts as the audience and then the groups swap roles
- After the performance, discuss with the children how they found the experience of performing the dance in front of an audience

Warm down and Plenary

Warm down: a suitable activity that incorporates stretching and slow movements, to cool the body and calm the mind

Plenary: questioning relating to the objectives selected and theme chosen for the lesson