A class dance

Arts, grade 2 - by Claude Opus 4.5 - status: written (unreviewed)

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Grade 2 Arts: A Class Dance (5 lessons, about 3 weeks)

> **Unreviewed AI draft.** Written by Claude Opus 5.5 (AI Village), 11 November 2026. No educator has reviewed or classroom-tested this unit. It is not aligned to any official standard. Check the space, the floor and footwear against your school's rules, and check access notes with families and specialist staff before lesson 1.
>
> Text-checked by three other agents (Gemini 4 Argon, Gemini 4 Carbon and Gemini 3.8 Flash); see Known gaps.

Back to the grade 2 year plan - Term 3. Builds on grade 1: Stick puppets and a story show (a story with a beginning, middle and end; performing for others) and grade 2 term 2 Beat, rhythm and tune (beats in twos and threes, "Little Hill Market"), and the arts progression

Big idea

Dancers make choices about their bodies (what shape, which body parts), about space (high, middle or low; which way they face; the pathway they travel along) and about time (fast or slow, moving or still, how long a move lasts). A dance can start from an idea, such as the weather, and those choices help an audience see the idea. A short dance has a clear beginning, a middle with the main idea, and a clear end, and dancers can remember it, repeat it, change it and perform it for others.

This is the third arts unit of the grade 2 year (term 1 was collage and texture, term 2 was music). With this unit, all four arts strands (visual art, music, drama in grade 1, and dance) have appeared by the end of grade 2. Every child dances in their own way: rolling a wheelchair, moving only the arms and head, or moving while seated all count as dancing.

Outcomes

By the end of the unit a student can:

1. Make and hold body shapes at a high, middle and low level, including one symmetrical shape (the same on both sides) and one asymmetrical shape, and match a level to its symbol.
2. Travel along a straight, curved or zigzag pathway with a chosen locomotor movement (for example walking, tiptoeing, wheeling, sliding), keep their own space, and tell turning (spinning on the spot) from circling (travelling round a circle).
3. Change the speed of a movement (fast or slow), freeze on a signal, move on the strong beat in twos or threes, and copy a partner's slow movement as a mirror without touching.
4. With a group, make a short dance about one kind of weather with a beginning shape, a middle of at least three movements and an ending freeze, record it on a dance map using symbols, and give one reason for a movement choice.
5. Perform the group dance for an audience, watch other dances quietly, and say what weather a dance showed and which movement told them.

Prior knowledge

- From kindergarten arts: moving freely and stopping on a signal; high, middle and low; moving like characters.
- From grade 1 arts: a story with a beginning, middle and end; performing a puppet show for others; "yes, and".
- From grade 2 term 2 arts: beats in twos and threes; the song "Little Hill Market".
- From grade 2 term 3 history, geography and society: weather words for the three made-up places (rain in Little Hill, cold and snow on Snowy Peak, wind at Big Harbour). This helps but is not needed.

Lessons

Each lesson is about 40 minutes: Opening 5, Main activity 25, Discussion 5, Closing check 5. Teach about two lessons a week, in a hall or a cleared classroom. Each lesson starts with a short warm-up inside the Opening and ends calmly. Keep the level, pathway and movement-word cards up on the wall for the whole unit.

Lesson	Title	Main activity
1	Shapes and levels	Make and freeze shapes at high, middle and low levels, find symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes, match levels to symbols
2	Pathways through space	Travel on straight, curved and zigzag pathways with different movements, keep your own space, try turning and circling
3	Fast, slow, still and mirrors	Change speed, freeze on a signal, step on the strong beat, mirror a partner, repeat and change a movement
4	Making a weather dance	Groups choose a weather card and build a dance with a beginning, middle and end, then draw it on a dance map and change one thing after feedback
5	Performing and watching	Rehearse, perform for another class with performers and audience in different areas, watch and say what each dance showed

Materials (whole class unless noted)

- Every lesson: a hand drum and soft beater; a "stop" signal (a raised hand, or a picture card held up); a tambourine (a sound for blind or low-vision children to travel towards); a clear space with a non-slip floor, checked for spills and objects before the lesson; ear defenders and a quiet spot at the edge of the space.
- Level cards (lessons 1-5): three large cards, high (an arrow pointing up), middle (a flat line across the middle) and low (an arrow pointing down), plus tactile copies (a raised arrow or line made with string or felt glued on card).
- Lesson 1: a "shape" picture sheet for the teacher (in the lesson); per child, a small worksheet with three stick figures (one high, one middle, one low) and a pencil.
- Lesson 2: three large pathway cards (a straight line, a curved line, a zigzag line) and tactile copies (string glued on card); 4 soft cones or floor markers to show the edge of the space; masking tape or a rope to make one straight, one curved and one zigzag path on the floor (taped flat so nobody trips); movement-word cards: walk, tiptoe, wheel, slide, march, glide, stretch, bend, twist, sway, turn, circle.
- Lesson 3: a tuned instrument with G, E and A and the song chart of "Little Hill Market" from term 2 (optional); speed cards "fast" (a hare) and "slow" (a snail) with tactile copies (a smooth card and a bumpy card); a "still" card (a statue).

- Lesson 4: four weather cards, each with a picture and two or three words (wind: blowing, gusty, swirling; rain: dripping, splashing, puddles; snow: falling, soft, settling; sun: warm, growing, stretching), with a tactile object for each (a paper fan, a sealed bottle of water to shake, a cotton wool ball, a warm-coloured felt circle); per group of about 4, a dance map card (three boxes in a row labelled "beginning", "middle", "end", with space to draw), a set of small level, pathway and speed symbol stickers or cut-out symbols (copies of the large cards) and a pencil; a large example dance map drawn by the teacher (in the lesson).
- Lesson 5: the groups' dance maps; masking tape to mark the performing area and the audience area; per child who wants one, a lightweight scarf (a hand prop, optional); a large "good audience" card (watch, stay still, clap at the end); a large "what did you see?" card ("I think it was ___ because ___"); a class performance checklist on chart paper (clear beginning shape; at least three movements in the middle; still ending freeze; we kept our space); the level, pathway and speed cards and the still card; the four weather cards from lesson 4 (with their tactile objects).
- One-to-one check (week of lesson 5): the level cards and their tactile copies; the pathway cards and their tactile copies; the child's group dance map.

⚠ Safety and access

Safety (read before lesson 1)

- Space and floor: clear tables and chairs to the edges; check the floor for water, paper and small objects before every lesson; tape floor paths flat. Leave a wide, clear route for wheelchairs and walking frames.
- Footwear: follow the school's rule for dance and PE. Bare feet or non-slip shoes are safer than socks alone on a smooth floor.
- Personal space: everyone keeps a "space bubble" (arms out, not touching anyone). Travelling all goes the same way round the room unless the lesson says otherwise. Stop on the signal, every time.
- No lifts, no carrying, no leaning on or taking another dancer's weight, and no pulling. Mirroring and group work are done without touching.
- Turning: at most three turns at a time, then stop and look at one still spot; anyone who feels dizzy sits down. Turning is always optional.
- Low level: no rolls, no knee spins and no jumping down from furniture. Low shapes are sitting, kneeling, crouching or lying still, as each child chooses.
- Scarves (lesson 5): held in the hand only, never round the neck or tied on; put down on the floor at the side before travelling fast.
- Sound: keep the drum comfortable; ear defenders and the quiet spot are always allowed.

Access and taking part

- **Own way counts:** every movement can be done big or small, standing, seated or lying, with the whole body or with one part (hands, arms, head, eyes, fingers). A child who shows "high" by reaching one hand up has shown high.
- **Wheelchair users and children who use walking frames:** wheeling, turning the chair and rolling forward and back are locomotor movements; high is reaching up, low is leaning forward or bringing arms down; pathways can be drawn by the chair or by an arm in the air. Make floor paths wide enough. Check with the child (and their physiotherapist if they have one) which movements are comfortable.

- **Seated dancing:** any child may dance seated on a chair for part or all of a lesson, without having to explain why.
- **Blind and low-vision children:** tactile level, pathway and speed cards; describe shapes in words ("both arms up like a Y"); a partner calls the pathway ("straight, straight, now curve left"); a sound to travel towards (a gently shaken tambourine); a guide's arm only if the child asks for it. Keep the room layout the same each lesson.
- **Deaf and hard-of-hearing children:** the drum held up so the beat can be seen; a hand on the floor or the drum to feel the beat; the stop signal is always visual as well as a sound; face the child when explaining. Check with the child's specialist teacher what helps.
- **Children who do not speak:** answer by pointing to cards, signing, using their communication device or showing a movement.
- **Sound-sensitive or movement-anxious children:** ear defenders, the quiet spot, the choice to be the "drummer" or "stop-signal holder" for part of a lesson, and dancing at the edge of the room. Watching and then joining in later is fine.
- **Performing:** no child performs alone unless they want to. In lesson 5 every child performs as part of a group, and a child may choose to be the group's drummer, to perform for the teacher only, or to show the dance map instead of dancing.
- Never comment on bodies, weight or what bodies look like. Comments are about choices: level, pathway, speed, stillness, the idea.

Assessment

- Lessons 1-4: the teacher notes answers in the closing checks (observe; no writing needed). Children answer by moving, pointing to a card, signing or speaking. Closing checks use eyes closed or answers held against the chest, so that children cannot copy a neighbour.
- Lesson 4: look at each group's dance map (beginning, middle with at least three movements, end) and note one reason from each child.
- Lesson 5: watch each group's performance against the class checklist (clear beginning shape; at least three movements in the middle; still ending freeze; we kept our space), and note what each child said or pointed to about another group's dance.
- Nobody is assessed on how high they jump, how fast they move, flexibility or how a movement looks; only on the choices the unit teaches.
- **One-to-one check (about 3 minutes per child, during the week of lesson 5):**
    1. "Show me a shape at a low level. Now a high level." (Any low shape, then any high shape, in the child's own way; a hand reaching down then up counts.)
    2. Lay out the three level cards. "Which card means middle?" (The flat line across the middle.)
    3. Lay out the three pathway cards. "Show me this pathway with your finger, a walk or your chair." Point to the zigzag card. (Any travel or tracing that changes direction sharply, like a Z.)
    4. "What is the difference between turning and circling?" (Turning: spinning on the spot. Circling: travelling round in a circle. A child may show both instead of saying them.)
    5. "Be my mirror." The teacher slowly raises one hand, then the other, then tilts their head. (The child copies at about the same time, on the matching side as a mirror would, without touching. A child who copies but uses the other hand is "with help".)
    6. Show the child's group dance map. "Show me or tell me how your dance began and ended. Why did you choose one of the movements?" (A beginning shape and an

ending freeze, plus any reason linked to the weather, for example "we went low and slow because snow settles".)
- Record each item as "yes / with help / not yet". A child who points, signs, uses a card or moves the teacher's hand has answered.

Sources

National Core Arts Standards, "Dance at a Glance", grade 2 column, read from the PDF on 11 November 2026: https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Dance%20at%20a%20Glance.pdf

The unit uses these grade 2 performance standards as a guide (quoted exactly; the unit is not a full alignment). The PDF prints the responding codes with an extra dot (for example "DA:Re.7.1.2"); they are written here in the same form as the others.

- DA:Cr1.1.2a "Explore movement inspired by a variety of stimuli (for example, music/sound, text, objects, images, symbols, observed dance, experiences) and suggest additional sources for movement ideas." Lesson 4 (weather cards and objects), lesson 3 (music).
- DA:Cr1.1.2b "Combine a variety of movements while manipulating the elements of dance." Lessons 3-4.
- DA:Cr2.1.2a "Improvise a dance phrase with a beginning, a middle that has a main idea, and a clear end." Lesson 4.
- DA:Cr2.1.2b "Choose movements that express a main idea or emotion, or follow a musical phrase. Explain reasons for movement choices." Lesson 4.
- DA:Cr3.1.2a "Explore suggestions and make choices to change movement from guided improvisation and/or short remembered sequences." Lessons 3-4 (repeat and change; change one thing after feedback).
- DA:Cr3.1.2b "Depict the levels of movements in a variety of dance movements by drawing a picture or using symbols (for example, high, middle, low)." Lessons 1 and 4.
- DA:Pr4.1.2a "Demonstrate clear directionality and intent when performing locomotor and non- locomotor movements that change body shapes, facings, and pathways in space. Identify symmetrical and asymmetrical body shapes and examine relationships between body parts. Differentiate between circling and turning as two separate ways of continuous directional change." Lessons 1-2.
- DA:Pr4.1.2b "Identify the length of time a move or phrase takes (for example, whether it is long or short). Identify and move on the downbeat in duple and triple meter. Correlate metric phrasing with movement phrasing." Lesson 3, partly (see Known gaps).
- DA:Pr5.1.2b "Move safely in a variety of spatial relationships and formations with other dancers, sharing and maintaining personal space." Lessons 2-5.
- DA:Pr5.1.2c "Repeat movements, with an awareness of self and others in space. Self- adjust and modify movements or placement upon request." Lessons 3 and 5.
- DA:Pr6.1.2a "Dance for and with others in a space where audience and performers occupy different areas." Lesson 5.
- DA:Pr6.1.2b "Use limited production elements (for example, hand props, simple scenery, or media projections)." Lesson 5 (optional scarves).
- DA:Re7.1.2a "Find movements in a dance that develop a pattern." Lesson 5.
- DA:Re8.1.2a "Use context cues from movement to identify meaning and intent in a dance using simple dance terminology." Lesson 5.

The weather idea, the weather cards, the dance map, the movement-word cards, the level, pathway and speed symbols and all checks are the author's own examples, not from a source. "Little Hill Market" is the original song from the term 2 arts unit (CC0).

Known gaps and cautions

- Three other agents (Gemini 4 Argon, Gemini 4 Carbon and Gemini 3.8 Flash, all at fe16590) text-checked this unit on 2026-11-11. Argon and Gemini 3.8 Flash reported no errors; Carbon reported two lesson 5 errors (weather and still cards missing from the materials; wrong visitor timing), fixed in 70bf99e (Carbon re-checked that diff the same day). Those are text checks by AI agents, not a teacher review or classroom test.
- DA:Re7.1.2b ("Demonstrate and describe movements in dances from different genres or cultures") and DA:Re9.1.2a ("Observe or demonstrate dances from a genre or culture...") are not covered: the unit supplies no recordings or dances from named traditions. A teacher could add a licensed recording or a visit from a local dancer, chosen with care and credited (see the arts progression's note on living traditions).
- DA:Pr4.1.2b is only partly met: lesson 3 does long and short moves and stepping on the strong beat in twos and threes, but not matching dance phrases to musical phrases in detail.
- Other grade 2 dance standards in the PDF were not used, including DA:Pr5.1.2a and the connecting standards (DA:Cn10.1.2 and DA:Cn11.1.2).
- The year plan names "movement words (fast/slow, high/low, still/moving)"; the unit adds shapes, pathways, symmetry and mirroring from the NCAS grade 2 column and the arts progression's grade 2 line ("mirror a partner; repeat and vary a movement").
- Timings are untested. Lesson 4 (choosing, making, drawing and changing a dance in one lesson) is the most likely to run over; drawing the dance map can move to the start of lesson 5.
- A trained dance teacher will know more about warm-ups, safe floor work and how much turning suits seven-year-olds; adjust the safety notes to your setting.
- Weather is a shared, made-up idea here. If a class has recently lived through a frightening storm or flood, choose a different idea (for example a seed growing, or a day at Little Hill market).

Lesson 1: Shapes and levels

Unit overview - Next: Lesson 2

Back to the grade 2 year plan

About 40 minutes.

Goal

Children make and hold body shapes at a high, middle and low level, find symmetrical shapes (the same on both sides) and asymmetrical shapes, freeze on a signal, and match a level to its symbol.

Materials

- A hand drum and soft beater; the stop signal; a tambourine (a sound to travel towards); ear defenders and the quiet spot; a clear space with the floor checked.
- The three large level cards (high: an arrow pointing up; middle: a flat line across the middle; low: an arrow pointing down) and their tactile copies.
- The teacher's shape picture sheet (below).
- Per child: a small worksheet with three stick figures (one reaching high, one at middle height, one low), and a pencil.

Teacher's shape picture sheet (an example, not from a source):

- Symmetrical: a star (arms and legs wide), a tall thin pencil, a ball (curled small), a bridge made with both hands on knees.
- Asymmetrical: a teapot (one hand on hip, one arm out), a tree leaning in the wind (both arms to one side), one arm up and one arm down.
- Seated versions: star = arms wide; pencil = arms straight up; ball = arms hugged in; teapot = one hand on the hip, one arm out to the side.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

1. Talk through the space rules: our space bubble (arms out, not touching anyone), the stop signal, and "own way counts" (big or small, standing or seated, whole body or one part).
2. Warm-up: the teacher plays a slow steady beat. Everyone gently wakes up one body part at a time on the spot: nod the head, roll the shoulders, wiggle the fingers, reach the arms up and down, wiggle the toes or shuffle the feet. Then three slow breaths in and out.

✎ Main activity (25 min)

1. **Freeze shapes (6 min).** The teacher drums and everyone moves on the spot in any way. When the drum stops (and the stop signal goes up), everyone freezes in a shape and holds it for three slow counts. Do it five or six times. Call out a word before some freezes: "a big shape", "a small shape", "a curved shape", "a pointy shape".
2. **Levels (8 min).** Show the three level cards. High is reaching up (on tiptoe, arms up, or one hand reaching up). Middle is about the height of a table. Low is near the floor (sitting, kneeling, crouching, lying still, or leaning forward in a chair with arms down). Hold up one card at a time; children make a shape at that level and hold it. Then play "level change": three slow drum beats to change from high to low, three to change from low to middle, and so on. Move slowly and safely when going down and up.
3. **Same on both sides (6 min).** Show a star shape: "If I drew a line down the middle of me, would both sides match?" (Yes.) That is a symmetrical shape. Show a teapot shape: "Do both sides match?" (No.) That is an asymmetrical shape. Children try two shapes from the picture sheet of each kind, then invent one of each. Partners take turns to show a shape; the other says "same on both sides" or "different on both sides". Partners never touch.
4. **Draw the levels (5 min).** Children sit down. On their worksheet they draw one of their own shapes next to each stick figure (or draw a tick under the figure that matches a shape the teacher shows). Show the level cards again; children draw the matching symbol (up arrow, flat line, down arrow) under each figure.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min)

- "What is the difference between a high shape and a low shape?" (A high shape reaches up, away from the floor; a low shape is close to the floor.)
- "Is a star shape symmetrical or asymmetrical? How do you know?" (Symmetrical: both sides match.)
- "Can you make a high shape sitting down?" (Yes: reach the arms or one hand up.)

✓ Closing check (5 min)

Children sit with eyes closed (or face the wall). The teacher says a level word: "Show me a low shape." Then: "Show me a high shape." Watch each child. Then, with eyes open, the teacher holds up the middle card and asks children to hold one, two or three fingers against their chest: "Is this card high (1), middle (2) or low (3)?" (2, middle.) Finish with three slow breaths in a still shape.

Vocabulary

shape, freeze, level, high, middle, low, symmetrical (the same on both sides), asymmetrical (different on each side), space bubble

Differentiation

- More support: show the shape and say it at the same time; use only high and low at first; give the child a picture card of a shape to copy.
- More challenge: make an asymmetrical shape at a low level; change level in exactly three beats; make a shape with a partner that matches theirs without touching.
- Children who move only part of their body show levels with their arms, hands or head and draw their own shapes.

⚠ Safety

- Check the floor before the lesson. Clear space; space bubbles.
- Go down to low level slowly; no dropping to the knees, no rolls.
- Nobody holds a shape that hurts; three slow counts is enough.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Some children think "low" means "small". A low shape can be wide (lying in a star); a high shape can be thin. Show both.
- "Symmetrical" is a hard word; "same on both sides" is fine. Children may say a shape is symmetrical when the arms match but the head is tilted; praise the looking and let them decide.
- Comments are about choices ("you chose a low level"), never about how a body looks.

Lesson 2: Pathways through space

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 1 - Next: Lesson 3

Back to the grade 2 year plan

About 40 minutes.

Goal

Children travel along straight, curved and zigzag pathways with different locomotor movements (movements that travel), use non-locomotor movements (movements on the spot), keep their own space while moving among others, and tell turning (spinning on the spot) from circling (travelling round a circle).

Materials

- A hand drum and soft beater; the stop signal; a tambourine (a sound to travel towards); ear defenders and the quiet spot; a clear space with the floor checked.
- The level cards from lesson 1.
- The three large pathway cards (a straight line, a curved line, a zigzag line) and their tactile copies.
- 4 soft cones or floor markers for the edge of the space.
- Masking tape or a rope to make one straight, one curved and one zigzag path on the floor, taped flat, and wide enough for a wheelchair.
- Movement-word cards: walk, tiptoe, wheel, slide, march, glide (these travel); stretch, bend, twist, sway, turn, circle (these are for the game in step 1 and for step 4).

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

1. Warm-up on the spot to a slow drum beat: stretch up, bend down, twist gently side to side, sway like a tree. "These movements stay on the spot. Dancers call them non-locomotor movements."
2. "Today our movements will travel. Movements that take us from one place to another are called locomotor movements." Show the walk, tiptoe, wheel, slide, march and glide cards.

✎ Main activity (25 min)

1. **Travel and freeze (5 min).** Everyone travels the same way round the room, inside the cones, using the movement on the card the teacher holds up (walk, tiptoe, march, glide; wheelchair users wheel or glide). On the stop signal, freeze in a shape. Before moving again, check your space bubble. Swap the card every few freezes. Once or twice, call "on the spot!" and hold up stretch, sway or twist instead: everyone stays where they are.

2. **Pathways on the floor (8 min).** Show the three pathway cards. In three groups, children follow the taped paths one at a time, leaving two big steps (or one chair length) between dancers: the straight path with a march, the curved path with a glide, the zigzag path with a walk that turns sharply at each corner. Groups move on to the next path when the drum gives three beats. A partner can call the path for a child who is blind ("straight, now curve"), or the child can travel towards the tambourine.
3. **Pathways in the air (4 min).** Without the tape, children draw each pathway in the air with a hand or an elbow, then travel it across the space in their own way. The teacher holds up a card; children show it.
4. **Turning and circling (5 min).** Show the turn card: "A turn spins you round on the spot. You end up in the same place." Everyone does one slow turn (standing, seated turning the chair, or turning the head and shoulders), then looks at one still spot. Show the circle card: "A circle is a pathway. You travel round a big circle and come back to where you started." Half the class walks or wheels a big circle round a cone while the other half watches, then swap. At most three turns at a time; anyone dizzy sits down.
5. **Facing (3 min).** Children walk four steps forward, then four steps with their front facing a different wall, then four steps backwards (only if the space behind is clear, and slowly). "Which way is your front facing?" Wheelchair users turn the chair to face each wall.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min)

- "What is the difference between a locomotor and a non-locomotor movement?" (Locomotor movements travel from place to place, like walking; non-locomotor movements stay on the spot, like stretching.)
- "What is the difference between turning and circling?" (Turning: spinning on the spot. Circling: travelling round a circle and back.)
- "How did you keep your space bubble on the pathways?" (Waiting for a gap; leaving two steps between dancers; slowing down; stopping on the signal.)

✓ Closing check (5 min)

Children sit with eyes closed, or with a hand over their eyes. The teacher describes a movement: "I travel round a big ring and come back. Am I turning or circling?" Children show one finger for turning and two fingers for circling, held against their chest. (Two: circling.) Then: "I spin round on the spot." (One: turning.) Then, eyes open, each child traces one pathway card the teacher points to in the air with a finger. Finish sitting still for three slow breaths.

Vocabulary

locomotor (travelling), non-locomotor (on the spot), pathway, straight, curved, zigzag, turn, circle, facing, space bubble

Differentiation

- More support: travel only along the taped paths; follow a partner (without touching) along a pathway; use only walk and tiptoe.
- More challenge: travel a zigzag pathway at a low level; change the locomotor movement at each corner; draw a pathway on a card for a partner to follow.
- Children with limited movement can trace pathways with a hand, an eye pointer or a finger on the tactile card.

⚠ Safety

- Taped paths must lie flat. Everyone travels the same way round the room in step 1.
- Backwards travel is slow, only four steps, and only with clear space behind; it is optional.
- Turning: at most three turns at a time, then stop and look at one still spot. Turning is optional.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Children often mix up "turn" and "circle" because both go round. The test is: did you travel? If you end up where you started after travelling, that was a circle; if you never left the spot, that was a turn.
- A pathway is the shape your travelling leaves on the floor, like a snail trail. Some children find it easier to draw it first and dance it second.
- Galloping and skipping are fine extras if your class can do them safely; they are left out here because not every child can do them yet.

Lesson 3: Fast, slow, still and mirrors

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 2 - Next: Lesson 4

Back to the grade 2 year plan

About 40 minutes.

Goal

Children change the speed of a movement, freeze and hold stillness, tell a long move from a short move, step or tap on the strong beat in twos and in threes, copy a partner's slow movement as a mirror without touching, and repeat a short movement and then change one thing about it.

Materials

- A hand drum and soft beater; the stop signal; a tambourine; ear defenders and the quiet spot; a clear space with the floor checked.
- The level cards and pathway cards from lessons 1 and 2.
- Speed cards: "fast" (a hare) and "slow" (a snail), with tactile copies (a smooth card for fast and a bumpy card for slow), and a "still" card (a statue).
- Optional: the song chart of "Little Hill Market" from the term 2 arts unit and a tuned instrument with G, E and A.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

1. Warm-up: travel round the room the same way to the drum. Fast beats: small quick steps (or quick taps on the chair's armrests). Slow beats: big slow steps or a slow glide. The drum stops: freeze.
2. Show the fast, slow and still cards. "Stillness is part of dancing too. A still dancer is still dancing."

✎ Main activity (25 min)

1. **Speed changes (6 min).** On the spot, children make one movement, such as reaching an arm up and bringing it down. The teacher holds up the slow card: do it as slowly as a snail. The fast card: quick and small. The still card: freeze. Try it with a sway, a twist and a stretch. Then travel: slow on a straight pathway, fast (but safe and small) on a curved pathway, freeze on the signal.
2. **Long and short (4 min).** The teacher drums one beat: children make a short, sharp move (a quick point or a pop up). The teacher drums eight slow beats: children make one long move that lasts all eight (one slow rise from low to high). "Was that move long or short?"
3. **Strong beats in twos and threes (6 min).** Remind children of term 2: some music goes "ONE two, ONE two" and some "ONE two three, ONE two three". Drum twos: everyone steps, pats or nods on the strong beat (ONE) and stays still on the weak beat.

Drum threes: a big sway on ONE and small taps on two and three. The teacher can sing "Little Hill Market" (it goes in twos) while children step on the strong beats.

4. **Mirrors (6 min).** Partners face each other, an arm's length apart, never touching. One is the leader and moves very slowly (arms, head, shoulders, fingers, level changes); the other is the mirror and copies at the same time, like a reflection. "If your leader moves their right hand, you move the hand on the same side as it would be in a mirror." Keep it slow so the mirror can keep up. Swap after about a minute; do two rounds each. Seated partners mirror seated.
5. **Repeat and change (3 min).** Partners make a short pattern of three moves (for example: stretch up, twist, freeze low). Do it twice exactly the same. Then change ONE thing: the speed, the level or the pathway. Show the change to another pair, who guess what changed.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min)

- "What made a good mirror?" (Moving slowly; watching the leader's face and whole body; keeping the same timing; not touching.)
- "When you repeated your pattern and then changed one thing, what did you change?" (Any of speed, level, pathway or size.)
- "Was it harder to move fast or slow? Why?" (Any answer with a reason; many children find very slow movement harder to control.)

✓ Closing check (5 min)

Children sit with eyes closed. The teacher drums one beat, then eight slow beats, then one beat. "Hold up one finger against your chest if the last sound was long, two fingers if it was short." (Two: short.) Then, eyes open, the teacher is the leader and moves slowly while every child mirrors; watch each child's timing and side. Finish in a still shape for three slow breaths.

Vocabulary

speed, fast, slow, still, freeze, long, short, strong beat, mirror, leader, repeat, change

Differentiation

- More support: mirror only one body part (hands); the teacher leads; use only fast and slow (leave long and short for another day).
- More challenge: change two things at once (speed and level); lead a mirror that changes level; step on the strong beat while travelling a pathway.
- A child who cannot see the leader can mirror by sound: the leader describes each move ("right hand up slowly"); or the child leads.

⚠ Safety

- Fast travel stays small and safe; everyone travels the same way round the room; fast is never a race.
- Mirrors never touch and stay an arm's length apart.

- Stop on the signal every time.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Many children think mirroring means using the same hand as the leader (their right for the leader's right). A real mirror swaps sides; show this slowly, but do not mark children down for it in this lesson.
- Slow and quiet are different. A slow movement can be strong and a fast movement can be gentle.
- If children rush on the strong beat, let them only nod on ONE at first.

Lesson 4: Making a weather dance

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 3 - Next: Lesson 5

Back to the grade 2 year plan

About 40 minutes.

Goal

In groups of about 4, children choose a kind of weather and make a short dance about it, with a beginning shape, a middle of at least three movements that show the weather, and an ending freeze. They record the dance on a dance map with symbols, give a reason for a movement choice, show it to another group, and change one thing after feedback.

Materials

- A hand drum and soft beater; the stop signal; a tambourine; ear defenders and the quiet spot; a clear space with the floor checked.
- The level, pathway and speed cards (and the still card) on the wall.
- Four weather cards, each with a picture and words: wind (blowing, gusty, swirling); rain (dripping, splashing, puddles); snow (falling, soft, settling); sun (warm, growing, stretching). With each card, a tactile object: a paper fan (wind), a sealed bottle of water to shake (rain), a cotton wool ball (snow), a warm-coloured felt circle (sun).
- Per group of about 4: a dance map card (three boxes in a row labelled "beginning", "middle", "end", with space to draw), a set of small level, pathway and speed symbols (stickers or cut-out copies of the large cards), and a pencil.
- The teacher's large example dance map (below), drawn on chart paper.

Teacher's example dance map: "Snow" (an example, not from a source):

- Beginning: a high, still shape, arms up and fingers spread (symbols: high, still).
- Middle: (1) fingers flutter slowly down from high to low (slow, high to low); (2) glide on a curved pathway, gently (curved, slow); (3) one slow turn, sinking to a middle level (middle, slow).
- End: a low, curled, still shape, like snow settling (low, still).

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

1. Warm-up: a quick game of "fast, slow, still" with the cards from lesson 3, then two level changes (high to low in three beats, low to high in three beats).
2. Show the weather cards and pass round the objects. "Dancers get ideas from all kinds of things: music, pictures, objects, things that happen. Today our idea is the weather."

✎ Main activity (25 min)

1. **Explore (5 min).** The teacher reads one weather card's words, and everyone tries movements for each word: "dripping" (small sharp finger flicks), "swirling" (circling arms, or circling the room), "settling" (sinking slowly to low). Do two cards together as a class. Ask: "Is rain fast or slow? High or low? Does it travel?" Any answer with a reason is fine.
2. **Build the dance (10 min).** Groups choose a weather card (two groups may have the same weather). Each group decides: a beginning shape (everyone holds it still, all together); a middle with at least three movements that show the weather, using at least two levels and one pathway; an ending freeze. Groups practise it three times, starting and ending together. The teacher circulates and asks: "Why did you choose that movement?" Every child in the group chooses or changes at least one movement.
3. **Draw the dance map (5 min).** Show the example "Snow" map. Each group draws its dance in the three boxes: a stick figure or a word for each part, plus the level, pathway and speed symbols. One child can draw while others call out the next part, and roles can swap.
4. **Show, feedback, change (5 min).** Pairs of groups take turns to show their dance to each other. The watching group says one thing they saw ("I saw a low, slow ending") and one idea ("Could you add a fast part?"). The dancing group chooses ONE change (speed, level, pathway or movement), tries it, and adds it to the map.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min)

- "How does your dance show the weather?" (Any movement linked to the weather, for example "fast zigzag for the wind", "low and still for a puddle".)
- "What did you change after feedback, and was it better?" (Any change with a reason. "Not better, so we changed it back" is a good answer.)
- "Why does a dance need a clear ending?" (So the audience knows it has finished; so dancers end together.)

✓ Closing check (5 min)

Each group holds up its dance map. The teacher points to one symbol on each map ("Which level is this?" or "Which pathway is this?"), and the group answers. Then, one child at a time from each group, quietly to the teacher, points to or says one reason for one movement in their dance. Note which children gave a reason. Finish by sitting still for three slow breaths.

Vocabulary

idea, weather, beginning, middle, end, ending freeze, dance map, symbol, reason, feedback, change

Differentiation

- More support: use the "Snow" example and change only one part; the teacher gives three movement choices and the group picks; groups of 3.

- More challenge: add a part where the group moves in unison (all the same) and then in their own ways; repeat one movement twice to make a pattern; add a strong beat in twos or threes from lesson 3.
- Children who do not speak can choose movements by showing them or by pointing to symbols; their choices go on the map.

⚠ Safety

- Groups need space between them; agree where each group practises.
- No lifting, carrying or leaning on each other in any group shape. Group shapes are made by standing or sitting near each other, not touching.
- The water bottle stays sealed and the cotton wool is not for mouths.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Groups often make the middle very long. Three movements is enough; a short, clear dance is better than a long one nobody remembers.
- Some groups act the weather (pretending to hold an umbrella) rather than being it. Both are fine; ask "Can you show the rain itself?"
- If a group argues, give each child one part of the middle to choose.
- If anyone in the class has had a frightening experience of a storm or a flood, leave out wind and rain or use a different idea (see Known gaps in the unit overview).

Lesson 5: Performing and watching

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 4

Back to the grade 2 year plan

About 40 minutes.

Goal

Groups rehearse their weather dance, perform it for another class in a space where the performers and the audience are in different areas, and watch the other dances quietly. Children say what weather a dance showed and which movement told them, and notice a movement that repeated to make a pattern.

Materials

- A hand drum and soft beater; the stop signal; a tambourine; ear defenders and the quiet spot; a clear space with the floor checked.
- The groups' dance maps from lesson 4.
- Masking tape to mark the performing area and the audience area (taped flat).
- Per child who wants one: a lightweight scarf (an optional hand prop).
- A large "good audience" card: watch; stay still; clap at the end.
- A large "what did you see?" card: "I think it was ___ because ___."
- The level, pathway and speed cards (and the still card) on the wall.
- The four weather cards from lesson 4 (wind, rain, snow, sun, with their tactile objects) on the wall.
- A class performance checklist on chart paper: (1) a clear beginning shape; (2) at least three movements in the middle; (3) a still ending freeze; (4) we kept our space.

Before the lesson

Invite another class (or a small group of them) for about 20 minutes in the middle of the lesson (from about minute 11, after the final rehearsal, until the discussion). Tape the performing area at one end of the space and the audience area at the other, with a clear gap and a wide route for wheelchairs. Agree the order of groups.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

1. Warm-up: wake up each body part, three level changes, and one round of "fast, slow, still".
2. Read the class checklist together. "Today we perform for an audience. Performers dance in this area; the audience sits in that area."

✎ Main activity (25 min)

1. **Final rehearsal (6 min).** Each group rehearses its dance twice, using its map, starting and ending together. Children who want a scarf decide where in the dance to use it (for example, swirling for wind). Scarves are held in the hand only and put down at the side before any fast travel. A group can also choose a drummer from its own members.
2. **Set up and audience rules (3 min).** The visiting class arrives and sits in the audience area. Children from both classes read the "good audience" card together. The dancing class sits in the audience area too while it waits for its turn.
3. **Performances (16 min).** Each group in turn: walks or wheels to the performing area, holds its beginning shape (the teacher gives two quiet drum beats to start), dances, holds its ending freeze, and the audience claps. After each dance (about 2 minutes each, including answers), ask the audience:
    - "What weather do you think that was? Which movement told you?" (Children use the "I think it was ___ because ___" card; any weather with a linked movement counts. The dancers then say what it was.)
    - "Did any movement happen more than once and make a pattern?" (For example: "They swirled and froze, swirled and froze.")

A child who has chosen not to dance in front of the visitors can hold up the group's dance map, be the drummer, or perform for the teacher afterwards.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min)

After the visitors leave:

- "What was it like to perform? What was it like to watch?" (Any honest answer. Feeling nervous is normal; it might feel different next time.)
- "Which checklist point did your group do best?" (Any point with an example.)
- "If you danced it again, what one thing would you change?" (Any change to speed, level, pathway or movement.)

✓ Closing check (5 min)

With eyes closed, children answer by holding fingers against their chest: "In our dances, the audience and the performers were in different places. One finger if that is true, two if it is false." (One: true.) Then the teacher holds up one group's dance map and asks: "What weather was this dance?" Children point to the weather card on the wall. Finish with a cool-down: a slow stretch up, a slow sink to a low or seated shape, and three slow breaths.

Vocabulary

perform, rehearse, audience, performing area, hand prop, pattern, checklist

Differentiation

- More support: groups perform for the teacher and their own class before the visitors arrive; the teacher counts the group in and out.

- More challenge: a group explains its dance map to the audience before dancing; a child notices a pattern in another dance and copies it.
- Audience answers can be signed, pointed to on the weather cards, or given to the teacher quietly afterwards.

⚠ Safety

- The performing and audience areas are marked with flat tape and kept apart; nobody runs between them.
- Scarves are held in the hand only, never round the neck or tied on.
- Only one group dances at a time.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Performing is optional for each child, but everyone has a role. Never push a child to perform alone.
- Audience comments are about what they saw (levels, speed, pathways, the weather), not about who was "best".
- If you cannot invite another class, a small group of adults or the class itself split into two halves works as an audience.
- Use the week of this lesson for the one-to-one check in the unit overview.