The Nutcracker

Activity Workbook

Overview & Purpose

The purpose of Ballet Theatre Company's (BTC) “The Nutcracker Activity Workbook” is to take children of all ages on a hands-on experience through BTC's rendition of the ballet production, The Nutcracker. The activity book will include reading comprehension activities pertaining to the story of The Nutcracker, inspire creativity, and introduce students to the world of ballet and performing arts.

Materials Needed

This packet includes leveled lessons for K-5, discussion starters, comprehension worksheets, coloring sheets, and fun activity pages.

Other materials you will need:

1. Crayons, Color Pencils or Markers
2. Scissors
3. Glue Stick
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The History of The Nutcracker

The Nutcracker Ballet is based on the story "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King" written by E.T.A. Hoffman. It is the story of a young German girl who dreams about a Nutcracker Prince and a fierce battle against a Mouse King.

In 1891, the legendary choreographer Marius Petipa commissioned Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky to write the music for the Nutcracker Ballet. When Marius Petipa had the idea to choreograph the story into a ballet, it was actually based on a revision by Alexander Dumas, a well-known French author.

In 1892, the first showing of the Nutcracker took place at the Mariinsky Theatre of Russia. The Nutcracker made its way to Western Europe in the 1930's and to America by 1940, and has since become an annual Holiday tradition.
Read the Story: The Nutcracker

There is a video storybook for you to share with your students, however if you would like to read the story as a second “close reading,” below is the transcript.

Christmas Eve at the Stahlbaum’s

On Christmas Eve, families travel to the Stahlbaum’s house for a holiday party. The house is beautifully decorated for Christmas and Clara and her brother Fritz are eager to greet their guests. The Stahlbaum’s friends and their families enjoy a happy celebration full of dancing and mingling that is only ever so often interrupted by Cousin Phineas causing mischief among the guests. Clara’s Godfather Drosselmeyer, a jolly toymaker, arrives at the party bringing magic tricks and wonder. He presents two life-size dancing dolls dressed as West Hartford’s historic figure, Noah Webster, and accompanying him, a Blue-Backed Speller Ballerina Doll, to entertain the guests. He then presents gifts to all the children at the party surprising Clara and Fritz with two beautiful wooden Nutcracker dolls of their very own. Clara and Fritz’s friends enjoy using the Nutcrackers to crack nuts and share a treat until Cousin Phineas breaks Clara’s newly beloved gift. Drosselmeyer fixes the broken wooden doll and Clara, Fritz, and their friends enjoy dancing with their new toys. Clara’s grandfather, an eager dancer, takes the spotlight with his frantic, but loving, wife and they share a holiday jig. The party guests leave saying goodnight to the Stahlbaum’s, and Mr. and Mrs. Stahlbaum send Clara and Fritz off to bed.

The Clock Strikes Midnight

Drosselmeyer appears casting his magic touch to the Nutcracker doll that had been left under the Christmas tree. Clara, remembering where her beloved doll was left, returns to the party room and falls asleep beneath the light of the Christmas tree with her doll in her arms. She then begins to dream.

In Clara’s dream, two angels enter the room and sprinkle their magic dust on the Christmas tree. Twelve mice appear and tease Clara in hopes to steal her Nutcracker. Fritz enters finding Clara very upset and Clara frantically explains the strange happenings that have taken place. Fritz agrees to help Clara search for a reasoning behind these strange phenomenons. Just then, Drosselmeyer appears and the Christmas tree begins to grow to twice its size! Drosselmeyer tells Clara that there will be a battle and helps prepare them by transforming their nightclothes into battle ready outfits.

Battle Scene

The Nutcracker, now life-size to Clara and Fritz, enters with his wooden toy soldiers to fight off the Mouse King and his mice minions. The battle ends with the Mouse King defeated and Clara’s Nutcracker doll badly wounded. Clara, unconsolable, is surprised when Drosselmeyer
enters and fixes her Nutcracker doll once again. This time, however, Drosselmeyer transforms the Nutcracker into a handsome Cavalier. Clara's Cavalier thanks her for her help in the battle and invites her to accompany him on a journey. Clara accepts his offer and bids farewell to her brother Fritz. She is then guided by the Cavalier into the Land of the Snow.

**Land of Snow**
Clara and her Cavalier are greeted by the Snow King and Queen and their dancing snowflakes in a winter wonderland. The Snow King and Queen then send Clara and the Cavalier to the wonderful Land of the Sweets.

**Land of the Sweets**
Clara and the Cavalier are led by angels who direct them to a dreamy land of gumdrops, candy canes and sweets. The two are welcomed into the Land of the Sweets by the friendly Dew Drop Fairy who asks about their travels to her kingdom. The Cavalier tells the Dew Drop Fairy about his daring battle with the Mouse King and how Clara's belief and a little magic brought him back to life.

The Dew Drop Fairy, impressed by both of their courageous efforts, rewards Clara and the Cavalier with several ethnic dances and gifts. Chinese dancers present them with the gift of tea. Arabian dancers offer them delicious coffee. Spanish dancers present a gift of chocolate and dance with flare. Mirliton dancers bring their flutes and play beautiful music. Russian dancers impress Clara with their high energy and tricks, and Mother Ginger and her Gingerbread Cookies dance for Clara and the Cavalier while trying to avoid the hungry foxes. The Dew Drop Fairy then calls her flowers and flower petals to offer a beautiful waltz in the Land of the Sweets.

**Clara’s Transformation & Grand Pas De Deux**
Clara's ultimate dream is granted by the Dew Drop Fairy who leads Clara to a magical box where she is transformed into the Sugar Plum Fairy. Her Cavalier greets her and together they dance among the glistening stars. Before she leaves, all those who dwell in the Land of the Sweets bid Clara goodbye and soon fade away.

**Christmas Morning**
Clara awakens to Fritz in excitement that it is finally Christmas morning. Clara, drowsy and confused, realizes that her journey was all but a dream. She runs to her Nutcracker and gazes into its eyes, remembering her incredible adventures that she will never forget.
Watch performance excerpts from BTC’s The Nutcracker

View excerpts from Ballet Theatre Company’s The Nutcracker that includes:

1. Party Scene
2. Battle Scene
3. Snow Scene
4. Arabian Divertissement
5. Spanish Divertissement
6. Russian Divertissement
7. Mother Ginger and her Gingerbread Cookies
8. Waltz of the Flowers
Discussion - The Story of The Nutcracker; Characters

Below we will identify the leading characters in the story of The Nutcracker.

**Clara** is a young girl and the main character in The Nutcracker. She receives a Nutcracker doll for Christmas, who comes to life and takes her on an adventure to the Land of the Sweets.

**Godfather Drosselmeyer** is a jolly toy maker, who loves his Goddaughter Clara and all the other children dearly. He brings gifts and magical, dancing dolls for everyone in the family on Christmas Eve.

**The Nutcracker** is Clara’s beloved doll that is given to her by her Godfather Drosselmeyer. After battling the Mouse King, the Nutcracker is turned into a real man by Godfather Drosselmeyer, and takes Clara on a grand adventure.

**The Mouse King** is the Nutcracker’s enemy. They battle in Clara’s house after everyone else has gone to sleep. At first it seems that the Mouse King will win, but with Clara’s help, the Nutcracker defeats him.

When Godfather Drosselmeyer uses his magic to turn the Nutcracker into a real person, he becomes the **Cavalier**. The Cavalier is a kind prince who dances with the Sugar Plum Fairy.

**The Dew Drop Fairy** is the ruler of the Land of the Sweets. She brings the other divertissements to dance for Clara and the Cavalier and bring them gifts. Then, she dances for them too with the help of her beautiful, dancing flowers.

After enjoying dancing and gifts from the Divertissements in the Land of the Sweets, Clara climbs into Godfather Drosselmeyer’s magical transformation box, where she is turned into the beautiful **Sugar Plum Fairy**. She then dances a beautiful pas de deux (dance of two) with The Cavalier.
Discussion - The Story of The Nutcracker

Below we will introduce the Six Pillars of Good Character: Trust, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship.

It is recommended that you watch the video or read the story of The Nutcracker before starting this conversation. Check comprehension with the worksheet found on the following page.

Trust - “Someone you can count on to help.”

Example in the Story:
1. Godfather Drosselmeyer helps Clara fix her Nutcracker doll in the Party Scene when Cousin Phineas breaks it.
2. Clara trusts her brother Fritz to assist the Nutcracker soldiers in the battle of the mice.

Examples in Your Life:
1. Teacher
2. Principal
3. Fire Fighter

Respect - “Someone you admire.”

Example in the Story:
1. The Dew Drop Fairy admired the Cavalier’s daring battle with the Mouse King

Examples in Your Life:
1. Parents
2. Teacher
3. Principal
4. Superheroes

Responsibility - “Your duties or job.”

Example in the Story:
1. The angels had the responsibility of leading Clara and her Cavalier to the Land of the Sweets.

Examples in Your Life:
1. Brush your teeth, make your bed, pack your school lunch
2. Do your part in your group project
3. Help your mom with chores
Fairness - “No playing favorites.”
Example in the Story:
1. The Stahlbaum’s invite ALL of their friends to their Christmas party.
Example in Your Life:
1. Sharing with friends, taking turns, or drawing lots.

Caring - “Kindness or concern for others.”
Examples in the Story:
1. Clara was worried about the Nutcracker’s injury following his daring battle with the Mouse King.
2. All the divertissements give Clara gifts and welcome her to the Land of the Sweets.
Example in Your Life:
1. Encouraging friends with clapping, hugs, or thumbs up.

Citizenship - “Showing trust, respect, responsibility, fairness, and caring every day!”
Examples in the Story:
1. The Dew Drop Fairy is the trusted ruler of the Land of the Sweets. She shows respect to all within her land and holds the responsibility of welcoming Clara and her Cavalier to the Land of the Sweets. She also cares about making Clara’s ultimate dream come true.
Example in Your Life:
1. Playing with everyone, even if you do not consider them a friend
Worksheet 1 - The Story of The Nutcracker; Identifying pillars of good character

Name ____________________________________________

Directions: Draw a scene from the story of The Nutcracker that identifies one of the pillars of good character in each box below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Respect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Fairness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring</th>
<th>Citizenship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Worksheet 2 - Identify Clara's journey; Reading Comprehension

Name ____________________________________________________________

Directions: Color and cut out the items below to place in their appropriate location in the story on Clara’s journey.
Worksheet 3 - The Story of The Nutcracker; Reading Comprehension

Name ____________________________________________________________________________

Divertissement (n.) : a minor entertainment or diversion
    In Ballet: A divertissement is a short dance within a ballet that displays a dancer’s
technical skill without advancing the plot or character development

Match the divertissements to their gift to Clara by drawing a line

The Spanish Divertissement

The Russian Divertissement

The Mirliton Divertissement

The Chinese Divertissement

Mother Ginger

The Dew Drop Fairy

The Arabian Divertissement
Worksheet 4 - Crossword Puzzle

Complete the crossword below!

Across
4. Holiday the Stahlbaum's celebrate with their friends
5. Clara's gift from Arabia
6. Mischievous cousin who breaks Clara's new gift
9. The Gingerbread Cookies' threat
10. Clara's ultimate dream (3 words)
12. Character who dances a holiday jig with his wife
17. Doll who represents a West Hartford historic figure (2 words)
18. Toy soldiers' enemy
19. A female ballerina's costume

Down
1. Flute-playing dancers
2. A jolly toy maker and Clara's Godfather
3. Clara's gift from China
5. Clara's gift from Spain
7. Magic sprinklers
8. Godfather Drosselmeyer's gifts to Clara and Fritz
11. The transformed Nutcracker doll
13. Land of the Sweets ruler (2 words)
14. Clara and her Cavalier meet the King and Queen of this land
15. The Dew Drop Fairy's special dance
16. Clara's brother
Worksheet 4 - Crossword Puzzle Answer Key

Across
4. Holiday the Stahlbaum's celebrate with their friends (christmas)
5. Clara's gift from Arabia (coffee)
6. Mischievous cousin who breaks Clara's new gift (phineas)
9. The Gingerbread Cookies' threat (foxes)
10. Clara's ultimate dream (3 words) (sugarplumfairy)
12. Character who dances a holiday jig with his wife (grandfather)
17. Doll who represents a West Hartford historic figure (2 words) (noahwebster)
18. Toy soldiers' enemy (mice)
19. A female ballerina's costume (tutu)

Down
1. Flute-playing dancers (mirlitons)
2. A jolly toy maker and Clara's Godfather (drosselmeyer)
3. Clara's gift from China (tea)
4. Clara's gift from Spain (chocolate)
5. Magic sprinklers (angels)
8. Godfather Drosselmeyer's gifts to Clara and Fritz (nutcrackers)
11. The transformed Nutcracker doll (cavalier)
13. Land of the Sweets ruler (2 words) (dewdrop)
14. Clara and her Cavalier meet the King and Queen of this land (snow)
15. The Dew Drop Fairy's special dance (waltz)
16. Clara's brother (fritz)
Worksheet 5 - Word Search

Find the listed words below in the word search!

Sugar Plum   Clara   Mice   Flutes   Phineas
Sweets       Angels   Drosselmeyer Christmas Coffee
Tea          Cavalier Snow   Dew Drop

The Nutcracker Word Search

S S A E N I H P A E H H R T
M I N W C E E A R S I A G R
F R C C L L N E E F F O C E
L E E S A C E C E E E Y C Y
U E D Y R H M S T O E O F E
T G E E A R U U P R E C I M
E H W R C I L G I S C L S L
S U D S W S O A L W A S C E
R P R G M T S R R E V P U S
G S O C A M N P U E A R U S
E A P E O A O L E T L I F O
N E E E R S W U R S I A W R
U A S T O G O M S V E E V D
S S A N G E L S E M R A L D
Worksheet 5 - Word Search Answer Key

[Image of word search puzzle]
Basic Ballet Positions - Feet and Port de bras

Port de bras (n): in classical ballet, both the general arm movements of a dancer and a designated set of exercises designed to improve the quality of these movements. The port de bras of classical ballet is meant to be a graceful and harmonious accent to the movements of the legs. In French it means “carriage of the arms”

First Position
Feet: Heels together and toes facing outward, Arms: Arms held in a circle across from naval

Second Position
Feet: Heels together and toes facing outward, hip distance apart, Arms: Open your arms in first position to the side keeping elbows lifted and shoulders back

Third Position
Feet: Start in first position, then move the heel of one of your feet to the middle of the other. Arms: Keep one arm in second position and round the other above the center of your head

Fourth Position
Feet: Place one foot in front of the other, about a foot’s distance apart, Arms: Keep the arm above your head rounded and round the other arm to a first position placement

Fifth Position
Feet: Stand with your feet close together, one in front of the other and toes facing outward, Arms: Keep the arm above your head rounded and carry the arm in first to match the arm above your head
Learning key vocabulary and ballet terms

Much like the fields of medicine and science, ballet has different terms that describe the movements of the dancers. From a very young age, often as young as three or four, dancers begin to learn the words that describe each movement that they learn. These words sound very different from the language we speak because they are all in French.

Ballet began in France back in the 1600’s, during the time of King Louis XIV. Louis XIV loved to dance; he put on elaborate shows with fancy costumes that could show off his dancing in an elegant and regal way. Over time, words developed for the most common steps and, as the rest of the world was introduced to ballet, they accepted the French terms as their own.

- **BALLET** – A theatrical work or entertainment in which a choreographer has expressed his or her ideas in group and solo dancing to a musical accompaniment with appropriate costumes, scenery.

- **CHOREOGRAPHER** – A person who plans dance compositions and plans and arranges dance movements and patterns for dances and especially ballets.

- **BALLET MISTRESS/MASTER** - A woman/man who directs, trains, and sometimes acts as choreographer for a ballet company.

- **PAS DE DEUX** – Dance for two, usually performed by a male and female dancer.

- **PRIMA BALLERINA** – The main female ballet dancer.

- **CORPS DE BALLET** – The ensemble of a ballet company; especially, the ensemble apart from the featured dancers.

- **PLIÉ** – Bent, bending. A bending of the knee or knees.

- **ARABESQUE** - A position of the body where the dancer stands on one leg, while the other leg is extended behind the body, with both knees straight.
Learning the key elements and personnel of Theater Production

A theater production requires many people working together to create the performance that the artistic director envisions. This team of people including: costume, make-up, lighting and sound designers, stage and production managers, electricians, stage-hands and many more, are responsible for getting the production into the theater, seeing that everything runs smoothly for the dancers, actors, musicians. The final product is a performance that many people will come to see and enjoy.

Stage Management
Stage management is responsible for overseeing the rehearsal process and coordinating communications among various production teams and personnel.

- **Stage Manager**: is an individual who has overall responsibility for stage management and the smooth execution of a theatrical production. A Stage manager requires a general understanding of all aspects of production and offers organizational support to ensure the process runs smoothly and efficiently.

- **Stagehand**: a person who moves scenery or props before or during the performance of a play.

Scenery
The scenery flat and any flown scenery or cloths are assembled by the set team under the direction of the set designer for a particular performance. The arrangement of scenery for a particular scene or part of the performance is known as the 'set'.

- **Set Designer**: is a person who designs and creates the scenery for the show

- **Prop Designer**: is a person who designs and creates the props for the show

Lighting Design
Stage lighting is lighting that is on a stage. Digging deeper, we find that we can shape someone's focus with light, drawing their eyes around the stage. We can communicate emotion using color, dynamic range, gobo patterns and more!

- **Lighting Designer**: is a person who designs and creates the props for the show

Costume Design
Costume design is the creation of clothing for the overall appearance of a character or performer. Costume may refer to the style of dress particular to a nation, a class, or a period.

- **Costume Designer**: is a person who designs and creates costumes
| **Backdrop**  | Decorative backing to the stage setting. |
| **Props**     | A prop, formally known as property, is an object used on stage or screen by actors during a performance or screen production. In practical terms, a prop is considered to be anything movable or portable on a stage or a set, distinct from the actors, scenery, costumes, and electrical equipment. |
| **Ballet Tutu** | A traditional costume worn by a female ballet dancer. There are several styles of tutus - the most common are the short, flat, pancake style where the stiff net skirt sticks straight out from the dancer's hips and the romantic tutu which has a long soft net (called tulle) skirt which falls below the dancer's knees to mid-calf. |
| **Ballet Tunic** | The top worn by a male dancer that comes to the waist-line or just below. It is usually made in two pieces. The under tunic is made from a stretchy fabric and has the matching sleeves to the outer tunic. The outer tunic is like a vest. When worn together, it appears to be one piece but allows the dancer to freely move his arms without the outer tunic rising above his waist when he lifts the ballerina up over his head. |
| **Lighting Boom** | A stage lighting boom is a vertical pipe that is placed on stage, usually to the side. Lights are hung on this pipe, so they can shine onto the stage from a horizontal angle. A broad base, known as a boom base, keeps the pipe stable. |
| **Spotlight** | A spotlight is a lamp projecting a narrow, intense beam of light directly on to a place or person, especially a performer on stage. |
| **Lighting Board** | The lighting board controls all of the electrical equipment on the stage. It requires one person to operate the board during the show to change the lights at the required time (turn them on or off, change the color and brightness. It is usually located in a booth up high and way in the back of the |
Worksheet 1 - Theater Production - Create A Backdrop for The Nutcracker

In the box below draw and design your very own backdrop for a scene from The Nutcracker. Choose one of the following: The Stahlbaum House, The Land of the Snow, or The Land of the Sweets.
Worksheet 2 - Theater Production - Create A Costume for The Nutcracker

Name ________________________________________________________________

Choose to make a costume for either a male or female ballet dancer as seen in The Nutcracker.