

Penelope Polka Dot

ABOUT THE BOOK

For her first ballet lesson, did Penelope have visions of the Sugar Plumb Fairy dancing in her head?

Absolutely not; Penelope only wanted to wear a tutu, but no ordinary one. She wanted a polka dot tutu because she remembered her friend Nina's beautiful Bo Peep doll. She had the most beautiful polka-dot tutu. Penelope had to have one just like it. Well, almost like it.

Always a girl who preferred to dance to her own tune, what would she do to find her own polka dot tutu? In class, will she listen and follow instructions? Will she try everything the teacher asks, and will she behave beautifully? Will she develop a love of dance and enjoy it so much that she will ask her mom every morning? "Is it *dance class today?*" Or will she drive her dance teacher around the bend?



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Penelope is here to put teachers and students alike in a J-O-Y-F-U-L learning space!

This guide is filled with book-specific activities, aligned with Core Curriculum Competencies, such as the use of language, to identify, create and share ideas, feelings and opinions and preferences. You will find integrated learning sure to make your classroom a stupendous and fantastical learning environment!



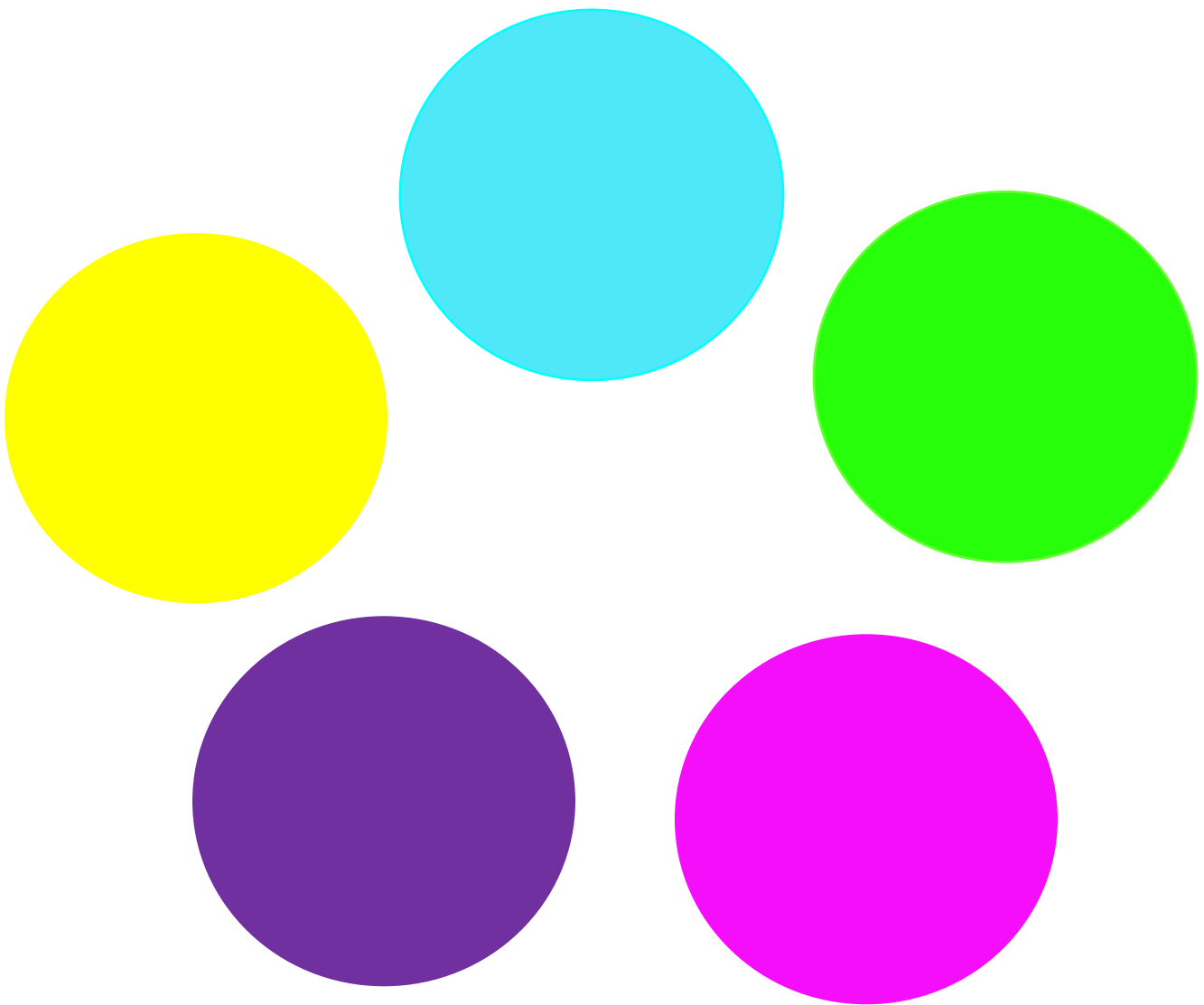
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Whole Class - Warm-Up

Call and Response to Colour

To begin, ask children to stand in a circle. Have them choose a colour (e.g., blue, red, purple etc.). Place the cue card with the colour in the centre of the ring.

Give students a minute to think about the mood, feeling and image this colour evokes. Students will move one at a time, making a movement gesture (consider using whole-body expression and dance elements) inspired by the colour. Ask students to demonstrate their movement one at a time, consecutively. Students will respond to each dancer's movement creation in turn. Repeat using a shade of the colour (e.g., navy, pink, lavender). Repeat this process four times using a different colour and shade each time. Let students choose their colour.



CORE CONNECTIONS

Communication

The ability to interact and share, acquire, transform ideas and information, and make connections by expressing their individuality, furthering their learning, and getting things done. It is fundamental to finding satisfaction, purpose, and joy.

Stories in ballet

Imagine that you must put together a ballet performance about the Three Little Pigs, Red Riding Hood, or another story that you like. What would you put on the stage to tell the story? What would the costumes look like? How many dancers would you need? How would the story end? What kind of music would you choose?



Thinking

Knowledge, skills, and processes associated with intellectual development permit students to take subject-specific concepts and content and transform them into a new understanding. This includes specific thinking skills, habits of mind, and metacognitive awareness to process information from various sources, including thoughts and feelings at a subconscious or unconscious level to create new understandings.

Using Your Arms and Legs

Read aloud the book: *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae. PDF is available at the site listed below.

In this story, Gerald is a giraffe who can't dance. Try as he may, his long, spindly legs buckle whenever he starts to boogie. Every year, he dreads going to the Great Jungle Dance - until one night, he finds his unique music.

- [new doc 2021-02-19 08.57.52 \(st-francixavier.sandwell.sch.uk\)](https://www.francixavier.sandwell.sch.uk/new-doc-2021-02-19-08.57.52)
- [Dances From Around the World - YouTube](#)



Have children decide what their favourite dance is. Invite them to practice and perform their dance in small groups.

Personal and Social

Encompass the abilities to speak and listen as it relates to students' identity in the world as individuals and members of their community and society. Personal and social competencies are what students need to thrive as individuals, understand and care about themselves and others, to find and achieve their purposes in the world.

Telling a Story in Dance

Like a story, a dance should have a beginning, a middle, and an end that people can follow when watching.

Sections of the dance can act like chapters of the story, breaking it down into smaller chunks and highlighting the most important events.

Procedure: Tell children they will speak without using words, and the rest of the group must translate what they are doing into words. Have each student pick a piece of paper out of a box on which there is an action, such as:

- Sweep the floor, wash your face, drive a car, etc. Again, ask students to show this action, while the others must tell what the action was.
- Explain that this is called "pantomime" and is one way to communicate without using words. Instead, the face and the body express the words. In dance, the same techniques are used to tell a story without words.
- Watch this excerpt of Sleeping Beauty and have students tell how the dancers tell this part of the story through movement and dance.
- [Tchaikovsky - Sleeping Beauty - Ballet - YouTube](#)

Objectives: Tell your own story

1. Create a character for the dance. The character in your dance will tell the story. That is the starting point.
2. Every dance must have a series of movements with specific names, and music is the glue that holds the moving story together. The movements will show us something about the character. Are your characters good, evil, bold or brave?
3. Tie moves with emotions. Will the story's telling play on the emotions, and what feelings will they evoke in your audience? Will the dance be running scared? Will they be happy? Their faces must also show emotion by smiling, crying or frowning.
4. Once the pieces are chosen to build the story, put together the emotions and movements to tell the story.
5. The best way to become good at telling stories in your dance is to practice and tell yourself stories in life. Use your imagination in other parts of life to imagine the story behind what you see. How could you retell that story with your favourite style of dance?
6. We all love to be told stories. That is why we remember the ones told to us as children. We stop to listen when someone tells a story. - Learning to tell stories in dance is not much different except that it is told without words.

Vocabulary and Use

Explain the meaning of words and their relationships and nuances. Use words in narratives to recount events in sequence, including details describing actions, thoughts, and feelings—use of temporal words to signal the order of events, leading to a conclusion.

Ballet Vocabulary

The following words can be used to tell your dance story in the preceding activity.

- **barre:** a piece of wooden equipment used for balance.
- **five basic positions:** *1st position, 2nd position, 3rd position, 4th position, and 5th position.*
- **plié:** to bend the knees
- **port de bras:** use of the arms
- **tendu:** to stretch the feet
- **relevé:** to rise
- **dégagés:** the working leg "disengages" from the supporting leg
- **grand battement:** to toss your leg in the air
- **chassé:** to slide along the floor
- **grand jeté:** a leap from one foot to the other
- **pirouette:** to turn on one leg
- **curtsy/bow:** to bend and gesture toward the audience