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**THE NUTCRACKER: AN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM**

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### **Program Outline**

Grades 1-5  
Balanced Literacy Program (grades 6-8 Art)

Students: This project is appropriate for most students who can work cooperatively and in groups. The children utilize standards and various strategy skills that require the use of oral and written language. Reading assignments are shared in groups and on an individual basis.

The students are provided with a mixed-media approach to learning about a classical story. They are provided with literature, music, art, theatrical scenery, period costumes, and dance. Students have the opportunity to study geography, history, and the architectural structure of castles.

The children are introduced to the story elements of a fairy tale: text, ballet, and script as well as video segments from The Nutcracker. They study photographs of different scenes to recall events in the story for sequencing and writing activities. The students research various weather conditions such as snow. They learn about weather patterns around the world, with an emphasis on places that have the same scenery/setting as the story: France, Switzerland, Germany, and London.

This helps them relate the holiday theme's atmosphere and effect while reading text. Math is integrated through the examination of various graphs of snowfalls in major cities.

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### **Major Goals and Overview**

The children review the genre of the fairy tale. They analyze character traits and compare multiple versions of text. Comparison studies include comparing and contrasting story elements. They review different endings and events highlighted throughout different versions. They compare descriptive uses of language and drawings. The students also create their own play based on their favorite version of the story.

Students may view segments from The Nutcracker video (Balanchine's) and/or from The Nutcracker on Ice. At that time, they are given the opportunity to take notes. The students produce written reports based on story elements, character analysis, and research about the author and composer's life. They enjoy dancing to the music and dramatizing their favorite scenes. Students will have a greater appreciation when viewing a live performance after being acquainted with text material. They use writing standards as well as dramatizing standards.

Children that have learning difficulties can use cassette/books to match their learning style. They may also use a CD-ROM Encyclopedia to conduct research about the author and composer. Students will use multi-version (24 mini-text) to individualize comprehension skills and interest level.

In the computer area, students can work independently while preparing and publishing their own report based on the story elements or research. They can use Venn diagrams to make comparisons on the computer.



## **Timeline**

This project follows a balanced literacy program. It combines English, reading, social studies, art, science, music, theatre, and dance. The program is standard-based and this timeline is only a suggested outline. You may adjust and/or change to meet your calendar year.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
September	Spend two days planning with teachers that are involved.
October	Introduce projects to students. Discuss project with local public library to assist students with material. Discuss implementation of standards and computer software. Lower-grades only: discuss the concept of toy soldiers.
November:	Students begin reading about the history of dance. Students become familiarized with dance/theatre vocabulary. Discuss how ballet training is an integral part of training for athletes. Introduce appropriate grade-level version of <i>The Nutcracker</i> . Read about the life of a professional dancer.
December:	Children read other adopted or appropriate-level versions of <u>The Nutcracker</u> . Students observe different settings. Students discuss how the various authors created a mood with the use of snow. Students also listen to music by Tchaikovsky and decipher different moods. Discuss major attractions to see over the holiday season: Radio City Music Hall, museums, bookstores, ballet production at Kaye Playhouse-Hunter College: The Yorkville Nutcracker or NYC Ballet. Students may dramatize a scene or entire play created from text.
January:	Students may view various sections of original film or cartoon version or <u>The Nutcracker on Ice</u> . Discuss Olympic events coming to the U.S: ice dancing.

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- February: Students read about nutcracker birds and other birds.  
Children utilize library material and CD-ROMs for research and writing.
- March: Continue genre on unit of fairy tales. Children should become familiar with: Snow White, Beauty and the Beast, Cinderella, and The Frog Prince.  
Compare multi-versions. Compare these fairy tales with The Nutcracker.  
Guest artist appearance: dancer, choreographer, and set-designer.
- April: Introduce the history of castles. Discuss life in the royal kingdom and architectural structure. Students are introduced to other countries cultures: dance, music, and food. Identify which ballets came from fairy tales.
- May: Students create their own fairy tale using information from previous research throughout the year.  
Students read and research material about artists that selected dance as their subject to paint or create a sculpture piece.
- June: Dance Festival within school.

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### **Types of Assessment Used**

Student's assessment is based on:

- Participating in groups
- Recognizing words from word wall and utilizing them in reports
- Completing projects using text material
- Computer-based assignments
- Writing and reading assessment (response to literature)

Students should be able to:

- Make predictions and sequence events of story
- Make comparisons and contrasts on Venn diagrams
- Complete creative projects (making an invitation to a party or writing a letter)
- Analyze character traits

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### **Lesson Plans**

The lesson plans consist of introducing the holiday setting, story elements, and character analysis. The genre-elements of a fairy tale are discussed and students are introduced to the characters in the story.

Describe the setting: Where & when  
Discuss the holiday season and weather conditions  
Time period of a fairy tale

Introduce the major characters: Nutcracker/toy soldier  
Marie  
Fritz  
Godfather (Grandfather) Drosselmeyer  
Mouse King

Read story aloud to students showing illustrations.

Standards: E2b The student produces a response to literature that demonstrates an understanding of the text material.

E5a The student responds to non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and drama using interpretive, critical, and evaluation process.

### **Major Steps to cover:**

1. Have students read story in groups.
2. Review elements of what makes The Nutcracker a fairy tale.
3. Introduce characters: descriptive features, family relationship, and characteristics.
4. Segment story into various scenes and/or parts: beginning, middle, and end.
5. Discuss major problems characters encountered: problem/solution.
6. Discuss ending of the story.

Standard E3b The student participates in group meetings in which the student displays appropriate turn-taking behaviors.



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After students complete research tasks with resource books available about castles, the teacher can schedule whole group discussion. Discussions may include how people lived in their castles: cooking facilities, kitchen, and how a drawbridge was used for protection.

### **Lesson Plan: Sequence major events in story**

Students should be able to reorganize a group of sentence strips from an experience chart that sequence major events:

- It was Christmas Eve.
- Everyone went into the parlor to look at a decorated tree filled with ornaments.
- There were many boxes placed neatly under its branches.
- There was a rectangular box with a soldier inside.
- Marie was surprised to see a wooden nutcracker inside her box.
- Fritz was careless and dropped the nutcracker.
- Marie was very upset.
- The nutcracker and the Mouse King were having a battle.
- The nutcracker turned into a very handsome prince.
- The delighted prince took Marie to her favorite place: Land of Sweets.
- Marie met the Sugar Plum Fairy and listened to music.
- She woke up from her dream.

Standard: E3b The student participates in group meetings in which the student displays appropriate turn-taking behavior.

E4a The student demonstrates a basic understanding of the rules of the English language in written and oral work, i.e., the use of sentence structure.

Follow up assignment: ask children to write about a dream that they remember. Discuss the importance of everyone having a dream.

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### **Lesson Plan**

How do we describe the setting of The Nutcracker?  
What words describe the holiday experience? (Students review text)

Make an invitation to a holiday party based on The Nutcracker.

Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Place \_\_\_\_\_  
RSVP \_\_\_\_\_

Extended art/literature assignments:

Draw an illustration from the setting of this story. Use details from the story.

Draw an illustration using a fireplace background. Explain how this creates a mood for the story.

Design a book jacket for this story. On each side provide information  
Left side:

Introduce major characters and summarize the beginning of the story.  
Explain the genre.

Right side:

Tells us about the author and or illustrator. (Students use of computer)

Standard: E2b The student produces a response to literature that demonstrates an understanding of text.

Writing Activities:

Persuade a friend to read The Nutcracker.

Explain why you liked a particular version.

Select one part only to describe to your friend.

This should be in the form of a friendly letter.

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Discuss how life was different during this time period with a T-chart.

	<b>Nutcracker Period</b>	<b>Present Times</b>
Transportation:	horses & carriages	airplanes, trains, cars
Heating:	firewood	oil or gas
School:	walk	walk or bus
Jobs:	toy maker	designer
Homes:	castles	modern or Victorian
Communication:	letters	telephone, computers, letters

Compare and contrast two versions of The Nutcracker.

Use a Venn diagram.

Discuss literature text version & ballet/theatre

Materials: The Nutcracker retold by Pat Whitehead

The Story of the Nutcracker Ballet by Deborah Hautzig

**Circle 1-The Nutcracker**

Setting: House party  
 Friends & family  
 Beginning: Marie is in the drawing room  
 Party clothes

**Same**

illustrations  
 Christmas Eve  
 Characters  
 Marie & Fritz  
 wooden nutcracker  
 Godfather Drosselmeyer  
 Dream Sequence  
 Sugar Plum Fairy  
 Sleigh/snow scenes

**Circle 3-The Story of the Nutcracker Ballet**

Fritz--toy horse  
 Marie's presents--China doll  
 stage production/play  
 ballet  
 version/music & dance  
 harlequin costumes  
 Dancers--Universal  
 Russian--Cossack  
 Chinese--teapot  
 France--Polichinelles

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Standards: E2b The student produces a response to literature that demonstrates an understanding of the literary work.

E1c Reading: The student reads and comprehends information materials to develop understanding and expertise and produce with an oral report that restates or summarizes information; extends ideas; makes connections to related topics or information.

### **Major Steps to cover**

1. Teacher and students create this chart to complete assignments.
2. Students are shown that this is a reference tool with brief notes only.
3. Afterwards, this is used to complete above assignment comparing/contrasting stories.
4. Students should write using complete sentences and paragraph form after reviewing and discussing Venn diagrams only.

First Assignment: Explain how the settings are different in each story.

Hint: Original version verses theatrical stage

Explain how dance and music is integrated into the story version.

Ask students to discuss how the battle scenes are different in each version.

Students can analyze characters from both versions.

### **The Story of The Nutcracker**

How does the author use descriptive language?

Select one of the following lines from ballet version:

-“A huge tree filled the room and glittered with sparkling lights and tinsel.”

-“She heard strange squeaks and creaks and rustling noises.”

-“Snow began to fall in great swirling gusts.”

-“Next, they sailed together in a walnut shell down the River of Lemonade.”

-“The roofs were covered with sugar icing and the chimneys were made of jelly beans.”

How does this story meet the criteria for a fairy tale? (Grades 4 & 5)

Materials: Nutcracker by E.T. A. Hoffman  
Illustrated by Scott Gustafson

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Standard: E5a Considers the differences of genre

Introduce Major Characters:

Narrator  
Nutcracker  
Stahlbaum Family  
Marie  
Fritz  
Godfather  
Mice  
Toy Soldiers  
Astronomer  
Clockmaker  
Evil Mouse King

### **Major Steps to Cover**

1. Discuss the author's use of dialogue.
2. Group discussion on how this meets the criteria for a fairy tale?

Use of magic spells  
Story takes place a long time ago  
Happy ending  
Problem/Solution

3. Army battle scene
4. Description of toyland
5. Marzipan Castle

Follow-Up

Discuss elements of a dream.  
Discuss author's use of astrology.

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### Computer Lessons

Students may utilize computer to write research reports.

### CD Writing Process

CD-ROM Grolier's Encyclopedia 1998:

- Research on snow
- Nutcracker birds
- Astrology
- History of fairy tales

Projects that may be assigned to integrate lessons:

How is snow formed from crystals?  
What are nutcracker birds?

What is the study of astrology?  
How does an astrologist make predictions? (globe and stars)

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### Sample Worksheets

Meet the characters in The Nutcracker:

Identify characters:

Example: Nutcracker  
Marie  
Evil Mouse King  
Fritz  
Godfather  
Clockmaker  
Mice  
Toys

### **Worksheet:**

Write a description of the setting of the story The Nutcracker.

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## Worksheet

### The Nutcracker

Genre:

Three elements that prove this genre:

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Setting:

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Major Characters:

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Problem/Solution:

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### **Resources**

#### Resources for dance:

Dances Patrelle

The Yorkville Nutcracker

Kaye Playhouse @

Hunter College

(212) 772-4448

Rehearsals available upon request (212) 722-7933

New York City Ballet

Web Site: [WWWNYCBallet.Com](http://WWWNYCBallet.Com)  
[education@nycballet.com](mailto:education@nycballet.com)

The Ballet Company

1887 Broadway

New York, NY 10023

Collectibles, Books & Videos

Photographs, Magazines, and CDs

(212) 246-6893

Barnes & Noble

Booksellers

160 East 54th Street

New York, NY 10022

(212) 750-8033, Ext. 201

Ms. Linda Emanuel, 20% professional discount/over 120 versions

Ballet & Jazz Dance: Johnny Anzalone, choreographer/dancer [www.equinoxnyc.com](http://www.equinoxnyc.com)

Brazilian Dance: Leandro Carvalho (917) 450-6101 Guest Artist

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### **Resource List:**

- Bailey, Donna     All Kinds of Ice Skating   Austin, TX: Steck-Vaughn Co. 1991.
- Bailey, Donna     All Kinds of Dancing   Austin, TX: Steck-Vaughn Co. 1991.
- Black, Fiona       Nutcracker E.T.A. Hoffman retold Barnes & Noble 1991.
- Bloss, Janet Adele   Ballet Bunny Ohio: Willowisp Press Inc. 1989.
- Craig, Janet        What's It Like To Be a Ballet Dancer New Jersey Troll Assoc.
- Hautzig, Deborah   The Story of the Nutcracker Ballet illustrated by  
Diane Goode New York: Random House 1986.
- Hoffman, E.T.A.    The Nutcracker Illustrated by David Delamare  
The Unicorn Publishing House Morris Plains, N.J.
- Packard, Mary      Nutcracker (retold) Story Book Set Advent Calendar  
Workman Publishing Co. 1993.
- Whitehead, Pat     The Nutcracker (retold) illustrated by Beverly Rich  
New Jersey Troll Assoc. 1988.

Nutcracker Activity Books: Available through Dover Press  
Nutcracker Activity Book: Freemont & Beylon  
Nutcracker Ornaments: Stained Glass  
Nutcracker: Stewart  
Available through Dover Press, Mineola, NY

### **Castle**

Published by Rand McNally 1997 © Orpheus Book. Ltd.  
Created by Claire Aston, Nicholas Harvis, and Joanna Turner

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### Weather Books

Geography Facts & Experiments by Barbara Taylor  
Icebergs: Titans of the Oceans by Jenny Wood  
Avalanche by Steven Kramer  
A Day in the Life of a Meteorologist by Margot and Ken Wity  
How's the Weather? A look at Weather and How It Changes  
by Melvin & Gilda Berger

Maps & Globes  
Time for Kids

Assorted Videos:  
Suggested version -George Balanchine's The Nutcracker  
Nutcracker on Ice  
CD-ROMs: Writing Process; Grolier's Encyclopedia

### **Bibliography**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Fletcher, R. and J. Portalupi                 | Craft Lessons: Teaching Writing K-8<br>Maine: Stenhouse Publishers. 1998              |
| Greenfield, Eloise and<br>Lessie Jones Little | Childtimes: A Three-Generation Memoir<br>New York: Harper Collins. 1979.              |
| Hindley, Joanne                               | In the Company of Children<br>Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.1996.                       |
| Ray, Katie Wood                               | Wondrous Words: Writers in the<br>Elementary Classroom<br>IL: National Council. 1999. |

An integrated curriculum allows children to pursue learning in a holistic way, without the restrictions often imposed by subject boundaries. In early childhood programs it focuses upon the inter-relatedness of all curricular areas in helping children acquire basic learning tools. It recognizes that the curriculum for the primary grades includes reading, writing, listening, speaking, literature, drama, social studies, math, science, health, physical education, music, and visual arts. Integrating Curriculum: Lessons for Adult Education from Career and Technical Education. architecture, business, engineering, law and social work (Chernus et al., 2001). Over time there has been a shift in the CTE field to an integrated approach. Educators and policymakers realized that traditional CTE programs, which taught students specific occupational skills and aimed them toward work rather than further education, no longer best served either students or our increasingly complex and global economy.