

POST-SHOW ACTIVITY 3: 5 STEPS TO TELLING A STORY THROUGH DANCE

In this activity students work in groups to create and then choreograph a short story with a beginning, middle and end, inspired by their visit to see *Aladdin*. They develop characters and a simple plot line that they can tell through dance.

1. CHOOSING THE SETTING

Where will events be set? The locations for other Disney musicals include the African rainforest (*Tarzan*), London (*Mary Poppins*), under the sea (*The Little Mermaid*) and the African Savannah (*The Lion King*).

2. CHOOSING CHARACTERS

The groups need to decide who their key characters will be. Inspire their thinking by working as a whole class to discuss some of the character types that appear in *Aladdin* e.g. a hero and a heroine, a magical character, a villain and his henchman, friends, royalty, market traders and soldiers.

Discuss some simple adjectives that they could use to describe their characters e.g. a loyal friend, a treacherous villain, a lovelorn hero, an ambitious heroine. This will help when they come to devise and choreograph the story itself, as they provide useful cues towards the movement and expressions the dancers should use. The worksheet (supplied) contains a cast grid with an example filled in.

3. WORKING UP THE PLOT

When the groups have decided on the characters and setting, they need to start to develop a simple storyline on which to base the choreography. They should write three single sentences that summarise the beginning, middle and end of the story as a starting point. Remind the students that the events will need to be communicated without words. The example on the worksheet will help groups plan their own plot.

4. DEVELOPING THE CHOREOGRAPHY

Groups should read the Q&A notes with Casey Nicholaw and use the Post Show Activity 2 Worksheet to develop their choreography.

5. WORKING TOGETHER AS A GROUP

Students should think about the intention of the lead character, or characters, in their scene and discuss how the rest of the group will complete the performance by moving as an ensemble. They should take their inspiration from one of the many dance styles that influence the choreography in *Aladdin*. They should work with the natural talents of the group to develop a style that everyone feels comfortable with and should ensure that everyone plays their part, even though natural Dance Captains may emerge.



PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY 3 WORKSHEET: CREATE AND PERFORM A SHORT DANCE SEQUENCE THAT TELLS A STORY



GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR CHOREOGRAPHY

1. Choose your music as a group, it needs to be something everyone likes and will feel comfortable moving to.
2. Start with the beginning of the story. Who is on stage and what happens? Develop a move for each character that represents where they are at the beginning of the story and how they feel about the current situation.
3. Each member of the company should now develop a move that represents their character in the middle of the story. What about their situation has changed? What do they want to happen next?
4. Each member of the company should now develop a move for the end of the scene.
5. Rehearse and repeat the moves.
6. Use transitions to connect them and move the action forward (you may want to appoint a choreographer here who can direct the company through their moves).
7. Work slowly to begin with, before picking up the pace and adding in the music.

Remember that individual characters or groups of characters can work on their own pieces at the same time, before bringing all the dancers together, so no one should be sitting around watching!

Hints and tips

- Remember to warm-up and cool-down after rehearsing and performing, and stay hydrated.
- Respect everyone's individual abilities. You may not all be dancing at the same level.
- Respect each other's opinions. Everyone has a part to play.
- Aim to use everyone's talents and ability. If someone is a great Bollywood dancer and someone else loves popping, work them both into your routine.

EXAMPLE: (template supplied overleaf)

CHARACTER LIST

You may want to use the example below to help get you started...

| CHARACTER | ROLE | CHARACTER TRAITS |
|--------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Leila: A shopkeeper's daughter | Lead Dancer | Determined and ambitious |
| Jake: Leila's younger brother | Dancer | A dreamer who redeems himself at the end |
| Ruby and Mac: Two thieves | Dancers | Crafty and quick |
| Maria: The shop owner | Dancer | Proud and successful |

EXAMPLE:

PLOT SUMMARY

Write down your setting and then agree on three sentences that summarise the beginning, middle and end of the story as a starting point, for example:

- Setting: A modern day clothes shop and outside in the street.
- Beginning: Leila works in her father's shop with her brother Jake and, when Leila finds him on his phone when he should be working, they argue and Jake storms off.
- Middle: Left alone Leila is angrily stocking shelves when two thieves enter the shop and steal a jacket. She chases after them into the street.
- End: Outside the thieves meet Maria, mother, returning to the shop dragging Jake in tow. There is a struggle and they drop the goods they stole before making their escape as Leila, Jake and Maria celebrate their victory.



| CHARACTER | ROLE | CHARACTER TRAITS |
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| SETTING | | |
| PLOT SUMMARY | | |
| BEGINNING | | |
| MIDDLE | | |
| END | | |