

## **DANCE No. 9 - GIRAFFES CAN'T DANCE**

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Children should learn to:-

- respond to a range of stimuli
- respond imaginatively to character and narrative
- use simple motifs and movement patterns
- structure a dance with a partner
- describe and interpret dance using appropriate language

### **DANCE FRAMEWORK**

**SECTION 1 - Giraffes - "elegant" motif – unsteady**

**SECTION 2 - Pairs jungle dance**

**SECTION 3 - Sad  
Giraffes CAN dance**

**Accompaniment: Music – Year 4 CD – Tracks 4 - 10**

### **EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this dance most children will be able to:-

- understand that ideas initiated by a story can be translated into movement
- perform with expression and clarity of shape
- demonstrate simple motifs and movement patterns
- work with a partner to structure a dance using unison, mirroring and "follow my leader".
- understand how dance communicates moods, ideas and feeling.

# GIRAFFES CAN'T DANCE

## About the Dance

This is a dance that focuses on the main character of the giraffe “Gerald” and creates the narrative through movement. Other animal characters are created at the jungle dance and the contrast is emphasised between the solitary, angular giraffe and the sociable, rhythmic jungle animals.

Children create simple motifs and extend them and work on their own and with a partner.

## Stimulus

The stimulus for this dance is taken from a “Big Book” - “Giraffes Can’t Dance” by Giles Andreae and Guy Parker-Rees. Published by ORCHARD BOOKS, 96 Leonard Street, London EC2A 4XD. ISBN 1-84121-508-2. This is a beautifully written and illustrated book which could be read to the class as a whole prior to creating the dance. A synopsis of the story is as follows:-

“Gerald was a tall, thin, bandy-legged giraffe. He was very good at stretching upwards, forwards and sideways to reach the leaves on the trees, but when he tried to move fast he was awkward and buckled at the knees.

He dreaded the annual Jungle Dance because all the other animals could dance beautifully but he could not. He watched them all moving rhythmically together and he couldn’t compete so he walked away sadly.

Then he looked at the moon and listened to the swaying grass, and suddenly realised he could dance – he just needed the right music. He swayed and circled, jumped and turned, and all the animals applauded him. “You are the best dancer we have ever seen”.

He proudly finished his dance with a deep bow.”

## Resources (Appendix A31)

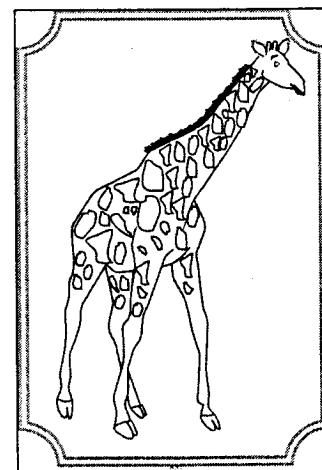
The book “Giraffes Can’t Dance”.

Pictures of giraffes

Poems or video snippets

Percussion

Music – Year 4 CD – Tracks 4 –10.



## Extension / Development / Enrichment

(a) The jungle dance could be extended to make it a larger group activity.

(b) For the informal “bow” children could finish with a partner ...

“A” symbolises the giraffe bowing

“B” symbolises a jungle animal stretched up high and wide applauding him.



Starting Activity

- (i) Move in and out of each other with neat, quick steps. On a signal ..STOP in a strong, still shape. *(Repeat and emphasise the contrast between the quick, light steps and the strong shapes.)*



- (ii) Repeat the task but this time, on a signal, curl up small. *(Feel the strength in the small tight shapes.)*



- (iii) Repeat task (ii). Run and on a signal curl up small, then SLOWLY grow into a tall, thin shape reaching for the ceiling. *(Repeat and emphasise the strength of the sustained movement.)*

Exploration and Development

- (i) Start in a small curled up shape. Slowly stretch upwards, then pull back into the curled shape. Explore, and stretch into different positions in the air. *(Encourage children to stretch upwards, forwards, to either side, and **WITH CARE** backwards.)*



- (ii) Choose **four** different stretched positions. Work to the rhythm of stretch (1-2) and curl (3-4). Create your own pattern of four stretch/curl actions – remember and repeat them. *(Accompany children with voice or tambour to help establish the rhythm.)*

- (iii) Use the same stretching movements but extend them by travelling off the spot to stretch i.e. move and stretch (x 4). Practise your motif and repeat it. *(Remind children they can use different ways of stepping and turning to move into the stretches – make sure you travel a little way into the stretch.)*



- (iv) Practise the stretching motif both on the spot and on the move. *(The smooth stretches symbolise the elegant movements of the giraffe reaching into the trees for leaves to eat – emphasise the **long body and neck** at full stretch. Practise several times – 4 phrases on the spot and 4 phrases travelling into stretches)* **(Track 4)**



- (v) Move quickly with small steps in an unbalanced way. *(Encourage children to relax the tension in their bodies and move unsteadily from side to side. As they do this, their feet will move with tiny steps on a wiggling pathway.)* Practise your wiggling pathways and unsteady, floppy bodies. **(Track 5)**

Making a Dance

- (i) Practise....
- stretching motif on the spot
  - stretching motif on the move
  - staggering unsteady runs.

*(Encourage children to link the different sections together smoothly)* **(Track 6)**

Concluding Activity

- (i) Sink slowly down to the floor – roll over sideways and stand up slowly. *(Emphasise SLOWLY AND SMOOTHLY)* Try it several times to make it smooth.

