

HANDA'S HEN

This narrative African-style dance is inspired by the book by Eileen Browne. The book reinforces counting from 1 to 10, each number associated with a different African animal. Four types of animals from the story, in addition to the hen, have been selected to provide contrasting actions, space and dynamics in this unit.

Specific Learning Outcomes

- Travel, turn, jump, gesture and balance with a degree of control and coordination.
- Explore and move with appropriate actions in response to the stimulus.
- State preferences when looking at others dancing and respond to feedback.

Stimulus

The story, Africa.

Resources

Handa's Hen: Eileen Browne, Walker Books, London 2002.

Accompaniment

African Heartbeat CD (Castle Pie) or *The Rough Guide to African Music for Children* (World Music Network); percussion instruments.

Content

- Rhythmic actions and variety in dynamics (see chapter 3)
- Body parts in isolation and coordination
- Steps, gestures and jumps
- Leading, following and mirroring
- Dancing in unison
- Pathways, directions and levels



Assessment

- Peer evaluation opportunities should be built in to each lesson—half the class watching the other half or the class watching specific groups.
- Evaluate individual achievements using specific learning outcomes.

Curriculum Links

- Literacy: Stories from other cultures
- Music: Responding to different sounds and rhythms

Options

For the final performance, the class could be divided into 4 groups for the animal sections or the children could choose which animal to represent.

Possible Unit Structure

- Lesson 1: Teach hen dance; explore hen hunt; create partner dance.
- Lesson 2: Recap hen dance and hen hunt; explore and create butterfly and mice phrases.
- Lesson 3: Recap butterfly and mice phrases; create cricket and spoonbill phrases.
- Lesson 4: Create final section (chicks follow the leader); practise each section and perform the complete dance.

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HANDA'S HEN (continued)**Possible Dance Structure**

- Hen hunt (in pairs)
- Fluttery butterflies, stripy mice, jumpy crickets, spoonbills (children may choose which to perform)
- Chicks follow the leader
- Hen dance

Warm-up

Use the hen dance (see Video folder in this web resource) as a warm-up each week. It could be developed by travelling from the circle into a space and dancing independently or with a partner or small group.

Tasks	Teaching points
<p>Hen dance: Teach and use this African-style dance as a warm-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand in a circle and feed the hens: Scatter corn with one hand from an imaginary bowl held in the other hand. Stand with feet apart and scatter right then left, bending and straightening legs rhythmically. • Pecking: Hands on hips, move head forwards and back (chin leading) like a chicken. • Flapping: Move elbows forwards and back rhythmically. • Scuffing: Brush the floor with one foot then step on it and repeat with the other foot. <p>Repeat each action to fit 8 or 16 beats of the music.</p> <p>Half the class watch the other half and evaluate.</p>	<p>After a number of repetitions, the children could face a partner and perform the dance or use the feeding action to take them into their own space to perform the dance again.</p> <p>Can they remember the order of actions? Do they keep time with the music?</p>
<p>Hen hunt: Lead and children follow to begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow an imaginary trail of footprints, stepping quietly and carefully. • Stop and look under, over, behind and inside imaginary objects (i.e., henhouse, bush, pots). • Walk through the wavy grass, using hands to clear the way, and then along the slippery path to the water hole. 	<p>Encourage straight and curved pathways.</p> <p>Encourage a still, clear shape each time they stop.</p>

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HANDA'S HEN (continued)

Tasks	Teaching points
<p>Hunting together: In pairs, one behind the other, children create their own hen hunt with clear pathways, shapes and levels. Swap roles.</p>	<p>Select good examples to demonstrate. Ask observers what makes these effective.</p>
<p>Look what we've found! Fluttery butterflies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit and flutter one hand in front of the body. Explore the space and repeat with both hands; move them together and separately. In pairs, mirror a partner's movements. Take turns leading. • Develop to perform standing up. <p>Stripy mice: Crouch on all fours and spring up like a meerkat; look this way and that before scampering to a different space; repeat several times; perform independently.</p> <p>Jumpy crickets: Explore bouncy jumps from 2 feet to 2 feet; vary the size (several small and some large jumps); create a zigzag pattern.</p> <p>Spoonbills: Take slow steps on long unfolding legs and with pointed toes and hands on hips; make dipping actions with head.</p> <p>Each set of animal actions could be linked with hunting phrases. Here are examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round the hen house: butterflies • Under the grain store: stripy mice • Through the long wavy grass: crickets • Along the slippery path to the water hole: spoonbills <p>Children could choose their favourite animal action of the four to perform. The class could then watch and evaluate each group.</p>	<p>You or an assistant could lead this to begin with and children should copy or mirror. Explore symmetric and asymmetric patterns. Use a shaker to accompany this. Use a tambourine or bells as accompaniment.</p> <p>Use a vibra-slap or tambour as accompaniment. Ensure knees bend for takeoff and landing, and encourage soft landings. Use a cymbal as accompaniment.</p> <p>How well does each group flutter, scamper, bounce and dip?</p>
<p>Handa's Hen: Children move sadly to centre of room and huddle together. Choose a leader for them to follow as they scurry and skip with small, light steps and hops (like chicks) to finish in a circle. Celebrate with the hen dance. Practise each section and link them together to perform and evaluate the complete dance.</p>	<p>Use the specific learning outcomes.</p>