



THE NUTCRACKER

CURRICULUM GUIDE

Southold Dance Theater

Southold is delighted to share the joy of dance and the production of the Nutcracker Ballet with your students. In this guide, we have provided a framework for identifying some of the key story elements that will assist in preparing your students for the performance. It is our hope this study guide will build their knowledge of The Nutcracker, and allow them to enjoy the ballet to a greater degree. We are delighted to share our love of dance with you and your students.

Southold would like to take a moment to thank our wonderful partners who help make dance education a possibility for our students and the community. We would not be able to provide the training to our students without you. Thank you for helping keep The Nutcracker a part of South Bend's holiday tradition for years to come.



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HISTORY

In 1973, several dancers came together because they shared an important common bond — their love of dance. The newly formed alliance made a commitment to respect distinct dance traditions by giving each artist the freedom to pursue her chosen idiom.

Founding members included Ann Dunn, the company's first Artistic Director, who was soon joined by Bonnie Boilini Baxter and Jill Engel Tulchinsky. Their vision guided the young company throughout its early years.

Performances and classes were held at Dancenter, a 100-year-old church converted to dance studios and theater space. SDT remained there until 1981 when the company moved temporarily to Center Century before relocating to its current home at the Colfax Cultural Arts Center, a cooperative arts and neighborhood complex with national historic site status.

ABOUT US

Southold Dance Theater (Southold) is a not-for-profit performing arts organization based in the discipline of ballet. Southold provides quality training and performance opportunities which allow each of its dancers to develop technique and artistry in a nurturing creative environment. Southold services the regional community by providing a variety of programs including high-quality performances and outreach programs which bring new audiences to dance. Southold makes life more enjoyable for people who share in the dance experience.



THE BEGINNINGS OF BALLET

Many people believe ballet began in France...

This however is not true! Ballet first began in the Italian Renaissance courts during the early 1400's. Terms like "ballet" and "ball" stem from the Italian word "ballare," which means "to dance." In its early beginnings, ballet was a form of dance reserved for only nobles, and looked nothing like it does today. In fact, dancers did not wear costumes, tutus or even pointe shoes.



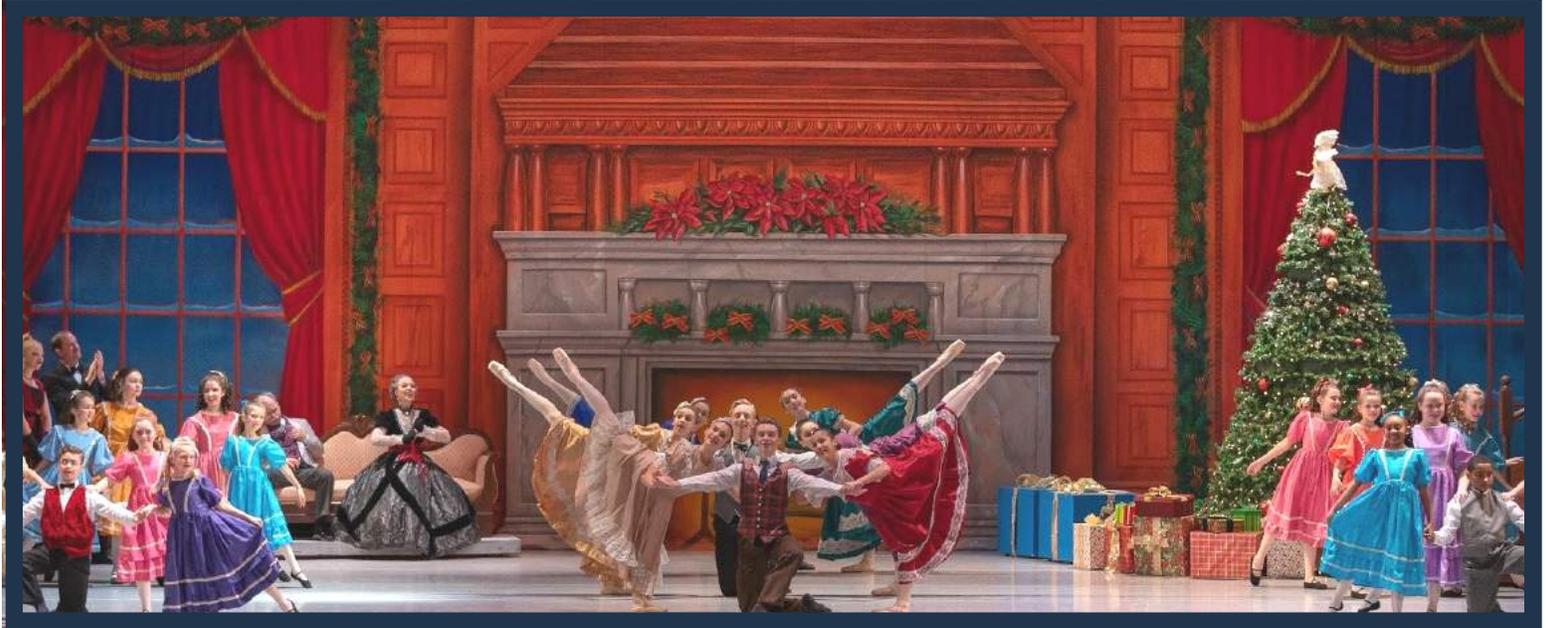
Sometime during the early 1500's ballet started to become more recognized when Catherine de Medic of Italy married French King Henry II. The official terminology and vocabulary of ballet was gradually changed to French over the next 100 years, and grew in popularity during the reign of French King Louis XIV. In America, ballet grew during the 1930's when George Balanchine established the New York City Ballet. George Balanchine was a famous ballet dancer from Russia. While on tour in America, Balanchine saw Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in their movies and believed there were people in America who would love to learn ballet. Balanchine created many new and interesting ballets and restaged some classics. We have Balanchine to thank for the Nutcracker becoming an American holiday tradition.



TEACHER TIP!

Learn more about the history of ballet consider watching -The origins of Ballet by Jennifer Tortorello and Adrienne Westwood.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEekFTj5PvU>



The Nutcracker is a classical ballet in **two acts**. It is based on E.T.A. Hoffmann's 1816 fairy tale The Nutcracker and the Mouse King. It tells the story of a little girl who goes to the Land of Sweets on Christmas Eve.



TEACHER TIP!

Making sure your students know the story ahead of time can help them stay engaged and understand the story better! Be sure to go over the story with your students before heading to the theater! Read the story on pages 6-8.

THE STORY BEGINS...

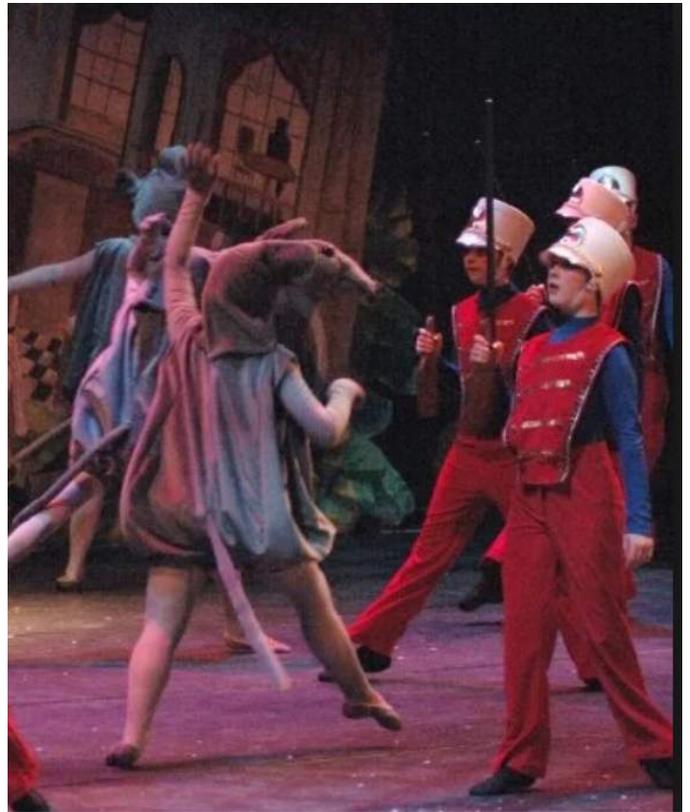
The Studebaker house is aflutter with preparations for their annual holiday party. Marie and her brother Fritz anxiously await the arrival of the guests while Uncle Drosselmeyer puts the finishing touches on his dolls. The party finally begins with plenty of food, presents, dancing, and fun! Beloved Uncle Drosselmeyer arrives and entertains the guests with a puppet show before presenting Marie with a truly magnificent Nutcracker.



THE NUTCRACKER BREAKS!

Fritz quickly becomes jealous of Marie's gift. The gift sparked sibling rivalry, and the Nutcracker is almost broken! Marie and her brother Fritz then dance with their friends and family and the night comes to a close. The wonderful evening ends in a festive gavotte with parents and children alike. With joy in their hearts, the guests take their leave of the Studebakers and journey home on the cold winter night.

The Studebakers are ready for bed, but Marie asks her mother to allow her to sleep on the couch for the night. Marie loves her Nutcracker so dearly, she wants to always be close to her Nutcracker doll. As, Marie cuddles closely with the Nutcracker, she falls asleep and at the stroke of midnight mice begin crawling everywhere! Suddenly the Mouse King appears. The Mouse King and his army of mice is ready to conquer the entire house! Marie awakes frightened by the mice and screams. The Nutcracker comes to life, protecting her from the intruders. A battle between the mice and soldier dolls ensues.



The mice and the soldiers battle each other for reign of the house, but in the end, the Nutcracker doll defeats the Mouse King and gets rid of the mouse invasion. The Nutcracker and his army of soldier dolls are victorious! Drosselmeyer appears and uses his magic to transform the Nutcracker doll into a wonderful prince for Marie. The mansion is soon left behind, as a new journey begins. Marie and her Prince begin to travel through the land of the dancing snowflakes. The snowflakes swirl and twirl around them as they follow the path, toward the Magical Kingdom.

THE LAND OF THE SWEETS

Drosselmeyer, Marie and her Nutcracker Prince arrive in the Magical Kingdom where angels and guests from around the world greet them. The Nutcracker Prince tells everyone in the kingdom about their travels and about the great fight against the mouse invasion. He then leads Marie to the throne so she can enjoy the festivities prepared especially for her. Dancers from Spain, China, Arabia, Russia and all over the world come to perform for Marie and The Nutcracker Prince.



When Marie awakens in the morning with her Nutcracker doll in her arms. She enjoyed he time in the land of the dancing snowflakes and the Land of the Sweets so much, she wishes she never left. Marie then wonders if she really traveled through the snowy grounds and to the Magical Kingdom or if her adventures were only a dream.



TEACHER TIP!

For younger students, sitting through two acts of ballet can be possibly be too long. Be sure to go over proper audience and theater etiquette before the performance so your students are properly prepared to sit through the show. Check out page 12 for tips.



TEACHER TIP!

Listening to the music with your students will help them become familiar with the story and the characters. Consider discussing the following after each selection:

What is the mood of the music?, What types of movement do you think the dancers will be doing to this music (fast, slow, sharp, smooth)? What types of costumes do you think would go with this music (color, style)? What kind of scenery would you imagine? Does this sound like dancing music to you? What instruments do you hear in the music?

Act I Ballet Score : What you will hear

- **Overture:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3K7k2slTSs>
- **Guest Arrive/Unveiling of the Christmas Tree:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ku2etgZ6oLY>
- **The March:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=maWN1MH9za4>
- **Father/Daughter Dance/Grandparents arrive:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jfMd4ee_Hc
- **Drosselmeyer arrives with gifts for children:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ah_fDwREp6g
- **Drosselmeyer gives gifts/Nutcracker get broken:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kQfT>
- **Guest Depart/ Magically spell begins:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkdl8eDURP0>
- **The Battle:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HteGkU3ZNuc>
- **The Journey through the snow:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDGBD-dPO_c
- **Waltz of the Snowflakes:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GS_gumNLHhM

Act II Ballet Score : What you will hear

- **The Magical Castle** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFaOolBam64>
- **Clara and the Prince:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vWUYN2E8xE>
- **Spanish Dance-Chocolate:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KgVQIWkMFk>
- **Arabian Dance-Coffee:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgZp9ipr7bE>
- **Chinese Dance-Tea:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLELwRPEU4M>
- **Russian Dance- Trepak:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8yyYNSA7pQ>
- **Dance of the Reeds:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGwjHRfcsMQ>
- **Motherginger and her Polichinelles:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7C4sV1ulT0>
- **Waltz of the Flowers:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kw0wLLVEMaA>
- **The Sugar Plum Fairy-** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-QAhsbQYmE>
- **The Coda-** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cqh8p5qVMx8>
- **The Final Good-bye** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSDU+SILXDg>



Read aloud or have students listen to the story of The Nutcracker ballet. Read on pages 6-8.



Your students can listen to the Nutcracker story via Audiobooks.

<https://www.storynory.com/a-christmas-nutcracker/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSd7Fw_8qhc

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O806NSPBCHU>



Listen to excerpts from the Tchaikowsky score and notice the ways the music changes with each different scene in the story. Music found on pages 9 -10.



Review vocabulary highlighted in this guide on pages 13-14.



Discuss audience etiquette. Found on page 12.

HOW TO BE A GOOD AUDIENCE



A live performance is a unique experience. Unlike television or going to the movies, the actors on stage can hear noise from the audience. So, as a courtesy to the performers and the others around you, please review the following information with your class and chaperones before attending the performance:

- Arrive on time.
- Do not bring any food, candy or drinks into the theatre.
- Walk in the theatre.
- Ushers can help you find your seats. Once you are in your seat, you may talk quietly until the performance begins.
- Keep your feet off the seats.
- Turn off or silence all cell phones, pagers, beepers and beeping watches before the performance begins.
- When the lights dim for the performance to begin, stop talking, turn your attention to the stage and enjoy the show.
- Stay in your seat during the performance.
- During the performance listen and watch closely. A live performance is not a video that you can rewind if you miss something.
- At the end of the performance, thank the performers by applauding. In return, they will thank you with a bow as you applaud.
- As you exit the theatre, remember to walk and stay with your group.



TEACHER TIP!

Learn more about audience etiquette by watching this video with your class!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OgkhuBAVTB8>

- **The Nutcracker** –a ballet by Peter Tchaikovsky. It tells the story of a Christmas present, a nutcracker, that comes to life. It takes a young girl on quite an adventure on eve.
- **Ballet** –an artistic dance performed to music that uses formal and very precise steps and gestures. **Ballerina**–a female ballet dancer.
- **Corps De Ballet** –ballet dancers who perform as a group. In the Nutcracker, the “Waltz of the Flowers” is performed by the corps de ballet.
- **Costume**–a set of clothes in a style that represents a character, place or a time period. In the Nutcracker the Sugar Plum Fairy wears a sparkly tutu to help you imagine that she’s a fairy.
- **Pas De Deux**- a ballet dance for a couple. The Sugar Plum Fairy and the Nutcracker Prince perform a pas de deux in Act 2.
- **Pirouette**–ballet turn in which the dancer turns around completely on one foot.
- **Godfather**–a man, usually a relative or close friend of the family who is a special person in a child's life. Often they help look after the child.
- **Nutcracker**–a wooden tool, often in the shape of a man, used to break the shells of nuts. They were often painted bright colors and given to children to open the nuts in their Christmas stockings.
- **Overture**--a musical introduction played at the beginning of a ballet or musical. It is a sampling of the music you will hear later.
- **Pantomime** – The art of telling a story, expressing a mood or an emotion, or describing an action without words.



- **Pointe Shoes** – Shoes worn by female dancers that enable them to dance on the tips of their toes. The area covering the toe is made of layers of fabric glued together in the shape of a “box” covered in satin and hardened. The sole is made of hard leather to prevent the shoe from breaking when bent. To keep the shoes on tightly, the dancers sew satin ribbons and elastic to the sides and tie the ribbons securely around their ankles. A pair of pointe shoes may only last for 3 to 4 days of work.
- **Tutu** – Ballet skirt, usually made of net or tulle. Tutus may be of varying lengths. While the style and mood of the ballet help to determine the preferred tutu length, the dancer’s technique is most clearly visible when she wears a short tutu.



ENHANCE THEIR LEARNING

There are many ways to incorporate learning about the Nutcracker that go beyond listing to the music or reading the story. The following educational links are some of our favorite sites that include activities that could be added to your classroom instruction. These links are primarily geared for grades prek-3rd, but many could be adapted for older students. It is our hope that using these activities will support your students' learning, and ultimately assist in a better understanding of the Nutcracker Ballet.

Southold is always looking for new resources and ideas. If you find a resource that could assist others in their instruction on the Nutcracker, please consider sharing it with us. (Add email address)

MATH ACTIVITIES

- **Create your own Ballerina Snowflake-** a symmetrical and cutting activity
<http://krokotak.com/2012/11/snowflake-ballerinas-for-little-hands/>
- **Build your own Lego Nutcracker** - <http://legomymamma.blogspot.com/2011/12/lego-nutcracker-building-instructions.html>
- **Mother Ginger 100 chart coloring activity** - <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Mother-Ginger-from-The-Nutcracker-Hundred-Chart-Mystery-Picture-FREE-Sample-4212421>

CRAFT & COLORING ACTIVITIES

- **Nutcracker paper tube puppet-** <http://www.makinglearningfun.com/themepages/NutcrackerToiletPaperTubePuppet.htm>
- **Draw a Happy Nutcracker** - <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Lets-Draw-a-Happy-Nutcracker-3522630>
- **Scenes from the Nutcracker coloring sheet-** <http://www.supercoloring.com/pages/category/cartoons/the-nutcracker/>

CRAFT ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

- **Create your own Nutcracker puppet for story retelling** - <https://printables4kids.com/printable-nutcracker-puppets/>
- **Cut and paste your own Nutcracker**- <http://www.makinglearningfun.com/themepages/NutcrackerCutandPaste.htm>

READING AND VOCABULARY

- **Nutcracker vocabulary word and pictures** - https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8_71tjoHnsNbS1KQ3NpcVVrZzQ/edit
- **Nutcracker word search vocabulary words** - <https://www.teacherspayteacher.com/Product/The-Nutcracker-Ballet-Word-Search-2253776>
- **Complete Nutcracker learning pack grade preschool-3rd.** Activities can be used in small group learning centers or independent student work. - <http://www.3dinosaurs.com/printable/nutcracker-learning-pack>
- **Fluency and Close reading activities for older students** - <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Viewing-the-Nutcracker-Holiday-Story-and-Activities-174397>
- **Create a silly version of the Nutcracker** - An activity to enrich The Nutcracker, teaching Nouns, Proper Nouns, Adjectives, and Verbs. <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Nutcracker-Mad-Lib-516889>



TEACHER TIP!

Did you know that you could schedule a classroom visit? Although Nutcracker season is a busy time of the year for our dancers, Southold has outreach programs for children in our community to build their understanding of ballet and the Nutcracker. If you are interested in a school visit, please email Diana Green at diana@southolddance.org.



**WE WANT
TO HEAR
FROM
YOU!**



Southold would love to display your students reactions about their experience at the Nutcracker Ballet at our studio. We hope this opportunity will offer every student a real-world experience and a better understanding of the ballet. Students writing can be mailed or dropped off at our office at 914 Lincoln Way W, South Bend, IN 46616.