

Ballet Class Activities

Ballet 1A, 1B, 2, and 3

Video Playlist: [Peter Pan](#)

Orchestral Music: [Peter Pan](#)

We're Off to Neverland!

"Second star to the right and straight on until morning!" Peter Pan tells Wendy and her brothers where Neverland is. For this activity, the teacher will initially be Peter Pan and students will be Wendy and her brothers. Call out different directions to face—go through the different walls and corners by number.

- 1 - facing the front wall of the room
- 2 - facing the downstage right corner of the room
- 3 - facing the stage right side of the room
- 4 - facing the upstage right corner of the room
- 5 - facing the back wall of the room
- 6 - facing the upstage left corner of the room
- 7 - facing the stage left side of the room
- 8 - facing the downstage left corner of the room

*The above labeling is according to the Vaganova method. If you follow another syllabus or curriculum you may label them differently. Call them out according to how you label them at your studio.

Next, cover downstage (toward the front of the room), upstage (toward the back of the room), stage right (the dancer's right when they are standing on stage and facing the audience), and stage left (the dancer's left when they are standing on stage and facing the audience). For this, you may have your students travel toward the direction you call out. Let them walk initially. Later, you can give them a step, like sways, galops, or runs.

Note: You may break this activity up over several classes. You do not have to call out all facings and directions in a single class, especially if this is new information for your students.

Optional: If your students are doing well with the facings and directions, let a student be the Peter Pan part and call out facings or directions for their fellow students. Rotate through several students having a turn as Peter Pan in each class so everyone has a turn being Peter Pan and the activity doesn't get too long.

Pixie Petit Allegro

How does Tinkerbell move? Is she slow and sluggish? No! As a pixie, does she move bright and spritely? Yes! Have your students do today's petit allegro combination in a bright and spritely way. It doesn't matter what step they are doing—from preparation to pas de chat, to glissade and assemblé—they should try to make their jumps and footwork quick and light with pointed feet in the air, like a pixie!

Optional: Younger students may enjoy it if you pretend to sprinkle some extra pixie dust on them before they start the combination!

Walking the Plank

Today, we'll be walking the plank, but with a waltz step! Have your students practice whatever version of the waltz step is appropriate for their level in a circle. They'll waltz in a large circle around the room—as the pirate ship!

One at a time, call out a student's name. When you call out their name, they must “walk the plank” by leaving the circle with a jump of choice and waiting at the side of the room or the middle of the room (teacher's choice).

Do this activity several times, calling out students' names in a different order each time.

Tick Tock Crock

This is an activity focusing on rhythm and musicality. Tick Tock Crock swallowed a clock and now he ticks to the time too! Ask your students to describe how a clock ticks. You can even bring in an analog clock or timer that makes a ticking noise with each second. Are the ticks even or uneven? (They are even because they tick on each second.)

4/4 - Have your students clap an even beat like a clock. Tell them this is a 4/4 meter. The beats are even. There is no emphasis on one in particular. None are skipped.

2/4 - A 2/4 meter is similar to a 4/4 meter, but every other beat is emphasized. Students can think of clapping louder on the first and third claps of every four claps.

6/8 - Since we're including a waltz step activity in this theme, it can be helpful to talk to students about the musicality of a waltz step. Just like we emphasized every other beat in the 2/4 meter, the 6/8 meter also has an emphasis. This time, however, the emphasis is on the first beat and then the second and third beat are unemphasized. Have your students clap a waltz (1-2-3, etc.) They'll clap louder on the first count and quieter on the second and third counts.

Quarter and Eighth Notes - Next, have your students clap evenly but twice as fast. Tell them, if what they were clapping previously were quarter notes, they are now clapping eighth notes. If quarter notes are one second each (in our clock analogy), eighth notes are half seconds. You would have two beats or claps per second instead of one per second. You can explore this further by dividing your class into two groups. Have both groups clap quarter notes (one per second). Have them clap eighth notes (two per second). Next, have group A clap quarter notes while group B claps eighth notes. Then switch. Continue the activity for as long as desired.

Please note: If this is a new topic for your students (or a review from having covered it some time ago), you don't need to cover all of the above in a single class. It can be helpful to initially start with the 4/4 meter to introduce the concept. And it can be helpful to cover the 6/8 if you will be doing a waltz step in today's class.

Tiger Lily's Celebration

When Peter Pan saves the Indian princess, Tiger Lily, her tribe and the lost boys have a great celebration. Have students listen to happy, celebratory music. Tell them they'll be doing a ballet improvisation of Peter Pan and Tiger Lily's celebration dance. After students have listened to the track, let them improvise to it. After they've finished, ask them about the movements they chose. Did they all dance happily? Why? If not, why not? What movements did they choose to do as happy movements? Did they think about their faces as they danced?

In another class, do this activity again. See if students dance differently after the first time followed by discussion. You can ask them similar questions as before after they've repeated the activity.