

Ballet Class Activities

Ballet 1A, 1B, 2, and 3

Video Playlist: [La Fille Mal Gardée](#)

Orchestral Music: [La Fille Mal Gardée](#)

Lovers' Knot

Simone's daughter, Lise, is in love with Colas—a young farmer. Simone, of course, has more ambitious and prosperous plans for his daughter's future so the lovers are discrete. Lise leaves a ribbon tied in a lovers' knot for Colas when she does not see him. Give each student two small strands of ribbon (optional: each tied in a knot). Students will hold each of their ribbons gently in each hand between the thumb and middle finger as they work on arm positions and port de bras.

Churning Butter

As your students work on spotting or pirouette exercises today, have them imagine they are turning like a butter churner. They should be straight up and down as they turn, imagining their spine with like the stick of the churner. They should also think of energy reaching down into the floor through their standing leg as they turn, just like how the stick is pushed down again again to churn the butter.

The Cornfield

The next scene is in the cornfield. Have you ever been in a corn maze? Have you ever gotten lost in one? Have your students pretend they are lost in a cornfield. You'll call out directions for them to face or walk toward to make it out of the cornfield. Whoever listens the best and is correct most often gets out first!

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, review 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 the facings or directions for their fellow students. Rotate through several students having a turn as Peter Pan in each class so the activity doesn't get too long.

Maypole Circle

If you can, have your students do a maypole dance. If you don't have supplies for an actual maypole dance in your studio, allow students to walk, run, step-brush, waltz, mazurka, or skip in a circle while waving brightly colored scarves. Have them start by traveling all the same direction around the circle. Next, have them travel so every other student is traveling in the opposite direction around the circle, weaving in and out of each other.

Tambourine Fun

In Act II, Simone plays the tambourine for Lise to dance. Divide your class into small groups of three or four students. Give each group a tambourine. Play music for your students to listen to initially. Then give them several minutes to choreograph a short improvisation. One group will go at a time. One student will tap the tambourine to the beat of the music as the others dance. After all groups have gone, discuss with your students what they have just done. How was the dancing between groups different? Was there anything that was the same? What did the tambourine players think about playing the tambourine?

Repeat the activity in subsequent weeks, alternating who in the group plays the tambourine.