Romeo and Juliet - Learning Resources

Stage fighting (Two or more 60 minute lessons)

In this lesson, students will explore different kinds of physical movement, and how they can be put together to tell a story. They will create their own stylised 'fight' scene, inspired by the choreographed fight sequence at the beginning of 'Romeo and Juliet' between the Montagues and the Capulets.

Who is it for?

This learning resource is for students studying PE or Dance at Key Stage 2 (years 5 & 6).

Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- Develop their flexibility, strength, technique and balance
- Perform choreographed movements using a range of movement patterns
- Compare their performances with one another and demonstrate improvement •

You will need

- Access to the production of 'Romeo and Juliet' in the On Demand player.
- The movement word bank (attached here as an appendix).
- Something to keep a beat for timing this could be a drum, or could be music.

Activities

1.

Watch the scene in which the Montagues and Capulets fight (from 2:30 to 3:30). Watch how the two sides fight with each other without having physical contact, and hear how the simple repetition of "Mon-Ta-Gue / Cap-U-Let" sets up a threatening atmosphere.

2.

Ask the class how the two sides 'fight' without touching - what are the actors doing to suggest a fight?

3.

Make sure the class are wearing comortable clothing suitable for movement, including shoes. The lesson will be physically active and for hygiene, health and safety they should be able to change into new clothes afterwards.

4.

Take the class through a simple stretch and warm-up exercise for no more than 5 minutes. There are some good examples of physical warm-up exercises in the video collection alongside Romeo and Juliet in the On Demand website.

5.

Ask the classs to move around the room and change the way they move as you call out different words from the LOCOMOTOR and NON-LOCOMOTOR word banks. Explain that some of them will involve them moving on the spot, some around the room, and some which could be both. Encourage them to use all of their body to explore the movement.

6.

After trying this for a few minutes, ask the class to change what they are doing when you call our words related to dynamics and speed, which you can take from the DYNAMICS word bank.

7.

The class should now have explored several different kinds of movement, and of different paces at which they can move. Put the group into pairs, and give each pair two contrasting words from the LOCOMOTOR bank. Ask them to take a word each, and explore moving together, keeping a relationship between them as they move in the manner of their word. (e.g run & walk, crawl & skip, waddle & scamper). Ask them to explore what kind of relationship the movement suggests between the two of them - is it friendly? Aggressive? Curious? Which movement gives its performer more power? They can explore adding a small amount of physical contact between them to support the movement if it helps.

8.

Now give each pair another two words from the NON-LOCOMOTOR bank. Again, they take one each. Now ask them to adapt their previous movements by switching between their two words. Ask each pair to develop their movements together, thinking about how they can smoothly transition between their two words. There should not be gaps - they should be moving all the time, always aware of the relationship between the two of them.

9.

Continue to develop these movements further by adding third or fourth words, or by bringing pairs together to see how they adapt their movements when introduced to a larger group. Have them think about what story or relationship the movements between them suggest.

10.

Have each pair or group consolidate their movements into a simple routine - this can be as simple or as complicated as you like - but the pupils should be able to memorise it.

11.

Finally, add in a simple movement to every routine that each group completes at the same time synchronised between all the groups as they perform together. They should now all have a routine that incorporates pace, space, movement, and power, which includes changes within it. They should have a simple understanding of different kinds of movement and of working together as a group.

- This is a good point at which to end a first lesson

12.

Take another look at the scene at the beginning of Romeo and Juliet where the characters fight, or another fight sequence of your choice. Ask the class to choose words which they think could illustrate that scene.

13.

Remind the class of the work they did in the first lesson, and share some of the words you used from the word bank on a board or flipchart. Pair the pupils off again, and explain that this time they will be working to make their own fight sequence - with no physical contact, as in the play.

14.

Review the list of words together, and discuss which words would be appropriate to use as inspiration for their fight choreography, and which wouldn't. Have each pair choose a handful of words to use as inspiration, and begin playing around with different movements to create a fight.

15.

Remind them to play with speed, power, and movement, and to use their whole bodies. Remember that when one person attacks, the other might retreat, or dodge. Better images are made by included forces and their opposite - and by showing a vairety of interesting movements.

16.

Introduce a rhythm to their movements. This can be with music, a drum beat, or repeating some words, like "Montague / Capulet" from the play, or some of the words used as inspiration.

17.

The pairs should now have a choreographed routine that shows a fight. Ask each pair to show their pieces to the class, and discuss them, asking the class to pick out some of the best movements from each. Combine these into a larger routine that four or five pairs can perform at once or in sequence, using a drum beat, music or spoken words to keep a rhythm.

18.

Have the class rehearse and perform the routine.

National Theatre

Appendix 1

LOCOMOTOR WORDS	NON-LOCOMOTOR WORDS	DYNAMIC/TEMPO WORDS
Walk	Rub	Pulse
Run	Sink	Aggressive
Jog	Rise	Abrupt
Stroll	Melt	Sluggish
Meander	Bend	Graceful
Tiptoe	Stretch	Violent
Skip	Twist	Forceful
Step	Swing	Nervous
Leap	Push	Heavy
Jump	Pull	Hesitant
Roll	Rock	Fluid
creep	Shake	Frantic
Crawl	Float	Slow
Wriggle	Dodge	Sustained
Dash	Jab	Tense
Zigzag	Wriggle	Smooth
Slide	Spin	Frantic
Нор	Sway	Hurried
Tumble	Open	Free
March	Close	Sharp
Stomp	Wrap	Alert
Shuffle	Burst	Jerky
Waddle	Shudder	Sticky
Scamper	Shake	Slo-mo
Prance	Slash	Light