

LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE FOR DANCE EDUCATION 2026

1. Your Name/Cooperating Teacher's Name: Alyssa Casamassa/Valerie Ramsey

Grade/Age/Level of Students: K-2nd/5-8/Beginner

Lesson # 2 of 4

2.LESSON TITLE: Animal Effort & Creating Dance Sentences

DATE: 4/12/26

UNIT OF STUDY: Animal Movement & Expression

Main Theme of Unit: Exploring how animals can inspire movement choices, creativity, and expression in dance

3. MAIN THEME OF LESSON: *Using effort qualities to make animal movements more expressive and combining them into a simple dance sentence*

4.ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

How can animals inspire the way we move in dance?

How can we change the quality of a movement?

How can we put movements together to make a dance sentence?

1. Learning Objectives: (Students will be able to..by/through...)

- *explore different effort qualities in movement*
- *apply effort qualities to various animal inspired movements*
- *create and perform a simple dance sentence using animal movements*

Dance Standards Addressed

DA:Cr1.1.K-2 – Explore movement inspired by a variety of stimuli and identify personal preferences in movement

DA:Cr2.1.K-2 – Imagine and organize ideas for movement with a beginning, middle, and end

DA:Pr4.1.K-2 – Demonstrate and describe expressive qualities of movement

DA:Re7.1.K-2 – Observe movement and describe what is seen

6. New York State Teaching and Learning Standards:

Knowledge of Students and Student Learning

Students in K–2 learn best through movement, play, and visual modeling.

Instructional Practice

Students engage in movement exploration using effort qualities and creative movement tasks.

Assessment for Student Learning

Teacher observes students ability to demonstrate different effort qualities and organize movement into a simple dance sentence

7. BluePrints for Teaching and Learning in Dance

Dance Making

Students create movement by exploring animal actions and applying effort qualities to build a short dance sentence

Developing Dance Literacy

Students learn and apply vocabulary like strong, light, smooth, sharp, and dance sentence.

Making Connections

Students connect movement to real observations of animals and how they move

8. COMMON CORE AND/OR CROSS-CURRICULAR STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Science Connection: Understanding animal characteristics and how different animals move

ELA Connection: Sequencing (beginning, middle, end)

9. DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC VOCABULARY:

Effort

Strong

Light

Smooth

Sharp

Animal Movement

Dance Sentence

Beginning

Middle

End

Freeze Shape

10. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGIES

(materials used in research, planning and/or instruction)

MATERIALS:

- **Texts, Music:** Music: fast, slow, playful type

11. DEVELOPMENTAL INFORMATION:

- *Students develop coordination, body awareness, creativity, and sequencing skills. They also build expressive ability by exploring how movement quality changes meaning.*

12. INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS:

The DE models each effort quality physically before asking students to try

The DE uses simple language and with movement.

The DE scaffolds from whole group exploration to independent/partner work.

The DE circulates to support and help student choices

LEARNING SEQUENCE

13. PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:

Students have previously explored basic animal movements in Lesson 1. They understand how to use their bodies to represent different animals but have not yet focused on how movement quality changes the way those animals move.

14. INTRODUCTION:

●—**Motivation:**

DE asks:

“How does a bunny move?”

“How does a turtle move?”

“Do they move the same way?”

Students show all together how each of those animals move. Just with their bodies/movement not words

DE explains:

“Today we are going to think not just about what animal we are, but how that animal moves! In dance, we call that effort.”

DE introduces:

- strong
- light
- smooth
- sharp

DE models one animal in multiple ways (ex: bird light vs bird sharp)
Students observe and respond to what changed:

DE asks questions like:

“What does it look like to be a light butterfly”

“What does it look like to be strong elephant”

15. WARM-UP/INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

Students begin “asleep” in their space.
DE calls out an animal ... then students wake up and move like that animal.

Animal examples:

Turtle!
Fish!
Snake!
Dog!

Short discussion of what level (high vs low) size (big vs small) speed (fast vs slow) each animal was
This brings back our lesson from last week on level, speed, size of animals, and to see if students still remember each of those 3

Then DE adds effort:

- “Move like a LIGHT bird”
- “Move like a STRONG elephant”
- “Move like a SMOOTH snake”
- “Move like a SHARP frog”

Students begin connecting effort to movement.

16. EXPLORATION:

Students move freely to music now as animals:
When music stops, DE calls:

- animal and effort combination

Examples:

- bird (light)
- elephant (strong)
- snake (smooth)

- crab (sharp)

Students quickly change their movement for effort.

Next student's will choose their own animal based on effort

DE calls an effort with music but students choose their own animal to match it

Now giving student's choice in their animal, rather than being given one

17. DEVELOPMENT:

Students create a dance sentence:

DE pairs students up

Each pair:

- chooses 3 animals
- different effort to each
- organizes into:
 - beginning
 - middle
 - end

Example:

frog (sharp) to snake (smooth) to elephant (strong freeze)

DE circulates and supports pairs after thoroughly explaining

18. SHARING:

Students perform (if time allows)

Class responds:

- "What animal did you see?"
- "What effort did you notice?"

Students may explain their choices.

19. CONCLUSION:

If time allows

DE reviews in class discussion:

"What is effort?"

“What are some effort qualities?”
 “How can we make our movements more interesting?”

Students respond.

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

FORMATIVE & SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT:

20. Type of assessment: *(This can be teacher observation and inquiry, self or peer assessment or a written assessment.)*

Teacher observation, movement exploration, peer discussion

Criteria

Criteria	3 – Meets Expectations	2 – Developing	1 – Beginning
Effort	Clearly shows different effort qualities	Attempts different effort qualities	Does not show effort changes
Animal Movement	Clearly represents animal	Somewhat clear	Unclear
Dance Sentence	Clear beginning, middle, end	Partial structure	No structure
Participation	Fully engaged	Participates with support	Limited participation

Criteria:

- *Did the student demonstrate different effort qualities?*
- *Did the student clearly show an animal?*
- *Did the student create a sequence with beginning, middle, and end?*

21. Teacher Skill Development: DE is focusing on using clear, simple language to introduce concepts like effort. The teacher is also working on pacing lessons with multiple short activities to maintain engagement for younger learners!

22. Revisions for Re-implementation: *If reteaching, DE may:*

- *spend more time modeling each effort quality*
- *provide visual cues like a chart with effort words*
- *give structured choices for students who struggle with open ended creation*

23. Reminder to do:Next lesson, students will build on their dance sentence by adding another element like as levels or pathways to make their movement more complex and expressive

Alyssa Casamassa