

# DANCE GAMES

## MUSICAL STATUES

Exactly what it says on the tin! Play some music and ask pupils to travel around the room on their own pathway. When the music stops, they must hold a still shape. And repeat! To check learning or introduce key concepts for the lesson, you could ask pupils to travel in specific ways (e.g. can you glide, can you crawl, can you jump) and/or set parameters for the creation of still shapes (e.g. only one body part in connection with the floor, the biggest shape you can make, the smallest shape you can make).



## GRAFFITI ART

A great game to introduce your pupils to improvisation and choreography without them even realising! Ask everyone to imagine they are holding a can of spray paint (including you!). Bring the imaginary can to life – give it a shake, test it on the floor, make a spraying sound as you use it, know what colour the paint is. Instruct pupils to spray their name in the space in front of them (you could set a specific number of letters for pupils who have long names). Repeat this with varying instructions – spray your name making it: as large as possible, as small as possible, read in reverse, land on the floor, land on the ceiling. Over time you can then get rid of the ‘can’ and ask them to use their hand/arm, then switch to other body parts, then mix different elements together e.g. a huge first letter in front of them using their head, a small second letter behind them using their big toe, a medium sized letter on the floor using their elbow, etc. Before they know it, they have created a phrase! They could then work in pairs to learn each other’s phrases or combine their movement ideas.



## CENTRE STAGE/SIMON SAYS

Similar to classic party games ‘Pirate Ship’ and ‘Runner Beans’, ‘Centre Stage’ requires pupils to listen to your verbal instructions and perform the relevant responses. Start simply – you could introduce areas of the stage – Stage Left, Stage Right, Upstage and Downstage and ask pupils to travel to the correct area when you call them out. Increase the level of difficulty by asking pupils to remain on one spot but make a body part extend or travel towards the correct location. This game can also be reimagined as ‘Simon Says’, asking pupils to perform types of action/pathway/dynamic and catching pupils out by omitting the initial instruction of ‘Simon Says’.

## REMOTE CONTROL

A game to experiment with dynamics! You, the teacher, are in control of the 'remote'. Ask pupils to travel around the room on their own pathway and respond to your instructions as outlined below:

**Start = Go (travel)**

**Stop = Stop completely still in the position you are in**

**Rewind = Travel backwards**

**Fast forward = Travel forwards at an increased speed**

**Frame by frame = Pupils continue travelling in their current direction (backwards or forwards) but with a sharp, jagged dynamic like the individual frames of a programme**

You could expand the number of instructions, or to add challenge ask pupils to travel in different ways then accurately reverse their movement for 'Rewind'. As pupils become more familiar with the game, you could also reverse the commands, e.g. Start = Stop, Stop = Start.

## AROUND THE CIRCLE

Using a softball or juggling ball (which is easier to catch), say someone's name and throw the ball to that person, after throwing the ball back they should travel around the outside of the circle until they come back to their initial place. Travel can start as walk/jog/run, you can then add in the rule that they should find a different way to travel around the circle (gallop, skip, lunge, hands and feet etc). To make the game inclusive for wheelchair users, use the term 'travel' and when choosing a different way, they can add a turn, change of direction or gesture.



## BALLOON DANCE

For younger pupils. Provide each pupil with a small, inflated balloon. The aim of the game is to prevent the balloon from hitting the floor. Initially allow pupils to keep the balloon aloft using their hands. As the game progresses, encourage them to use different body parts to connect with the balloon. How inventive can they be? You could also introduce different parameters, such as needing to travel whilst keeping the balloon in the air. For a pair task, provide one balloon to two pupils and repeat the activity. Can they take it in turns and make sure they do not use the same body part as their partner?

## BODY RHYTHMS

Stand in a circle. The teacher claps out a short repeat and the pupils respond by clapping the same rhythm. Repeat a few times with different rhythms. Following this work round the circle with each pupil clapping out a rhythm for the whole group to copy. Once everyone has had at least one turn, repeat the game but this time vary the body parts used to make the sound – incorporate clicks, stamps and pats. The teacher should model this before the pupils attempt to lead. This is an excellent strategy to explore rhythm, timing and accuracy.



## THE FLOOR IS...

Do you want your pupils to explore different ways of travelling and different qualities of movement? Ask pupils to spread out and find their own space. For this game they will be travelling through different environments. Name the environment – you could start with the obvious (lava!). Pupils then will travel around the space independently as though the floor is made from hot liquid. It would be helpful to add description such as 'It is boiling hot and you can't bear to stay in one place for long'. Repeat the game with different environments; a thick rainforest with hanging vines and thick mud, a cold icy Antarctic landscape with patches of deep snow and hard, smooth ice, a 'Mission Impossible' style room filled with lasers at a variety of heights. It may be beneficial to be specific about the use of pathways e.g. everyone travelling from one side of the space to the other.

## RACE ACROSS THE CLASSROOM



Not every game has to be for practical work. A 'Race Across the Classroom' is useful retrieval practice strategy and wonderful way to check learning! Split pupils into pairs or small groups and provide the first question. Each pair/group must come to you with their answer to receive the second question. And so on! The pair that get to the final question fastest win!

## CREATION STATION

A game to encourage teamwork which also provides a basic introduction to choreography. Call out a number and an object – pupils must get into a group of that number and create the object using their bodies. For example "Six, boat!" or "Four, tower!" As the teacher you can judge the most imaginative group object.



## HIGH FIVE

This game works well as part of a cool down as it is low impact and can be performed at a slower pace. The objective is to pass the high five around a circle. Start with a simple high five. You can then add movement prior to the high five, for example the arm takes the body into a turn and a low dip down before rising back up with the hand to meet the person next to them. This could be done in slow motion as if moving through thick sticky toffee.

## TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Provide a different instruction for each colour of traffic light (red, amber, green) and then call the colour rather than the instruction. For example: Red: travel, Amber: melt to floor, Green: freeze in a shape. Students can also suggest what each colour represents. To add challenge, change the game title to "Rainbow" and choosing the rainbow colours as to include more instructions (Red, Yellow, Pink, Green, Purple, Orange, Blue).

