



Episode 16: Free Falling

Clip: The Fouetté

Activity: Background to the Fouetté

Theme: Dance Knowledge

1. As a class, view the clip, *The Fouetté*, where Tara is made to perform multiple fouettés: a turn on one leg, with the 'working leg' extending to the front, whipping to the side, and the lower leg coming into 'retire' (foot to the knee of the 'supporting leg').
2. Discuss the physical skill needed to perform a fouetté with the students. Ask students to reflect on what the dancer must concentrate on in order to perfect such a skill. A properly executed series of fouettés, with perfect placement and no movement from the spot, separates great from good technicians. Principal dancers are often required to perform 32 fouettés in ballets such as *Swan Lake* and *Don Quixote*. The first dancer to perform 32 fouettés was Pierina Legnani of St Petersburg Imperial Ballet in a performance of *Cinderella*. This feat was repeated in many performances around the world and became so popular with audiences that they would count aloud how many turns the prima ballerina performed. Look at this online example: [32 single and double fouettés performed by Gillian Murphy of the American Ballet Theatre](#)
3. *Have the class practice a fouetté. Count how many fouettés each of the students can perform as a series. Select students from the class to be the judges and find the two most competent students. Set up a small competition where there is a fouetté duel between the two students with a prize going to the winner.

***Safety Note:** do not perform turns on carpet – there is great risk of knee dislocation and ankle injury. Use flooring that has some give but is not excessively slippery.
(For further guidance refer to *Ausdance Factsheet 7 – Safe dance floors in the 'Useful resources' section of this worksheet*).

Activity: Background to the Fouetté

4. Divide the class into smaller groups: historians, researchers, and illustrators. Each group will carry out a specific task:
 - a. *Researchers* will look for good examples of fouettés online and look for tips or instructions for performing a series of fouettés (there are several blogs on the subject, some entries are better written than others). The researchers will pass the tips and instructions they find onto teachers.
 - b. *Historians* will research the ballets in which an audience is likely to see 16–32 fouettés performed. They will look for dancers who have been/are famous for their execution of fouettés and search for reviews and comments made regarding the performance of fouettés.
 - c. *Illustrators* will look in books, magazines, and online for images and illustrations of dancers performing fouettés.
5. Using **Student Activity Sheet E16.1: Background to the Fouetté**, all students are to collect, select, arrange and present the results of their research to the class.

Download

- Student Activity Sheet E16.1: Background to the Fouetté

Useful resources

- [Ausdance Factsheet 16, Caring for the dancer's body](#)
- [Ausdance Factsheet 7, Safe dance floors](#)
- [Ausdance Factsheet 13, Safe spaces for dance](#)
- [Ausdance Factsheet 14, First aid for dancers](#)
- [Ausdance Factsheet 18, Occupational health & safety for the dance industry](#)
- [Ausdance Factsheet 11, Producing a dance performance](#)
- [Ausdance Factsheet 12, Healthy bones for a female dancer](#)
- [32 single and double fouettés performed by Gillian Murphy of the American Ballet Theatre](#)
- Anderson, J, *Ballet and Modern Dance: A Concise History*, 2nd ed, Princeton Book Company, Pennington, New Jersey, 1993.



NAME:

Student Activity Sheet:
Activity:

E16.1
Background
to the Fouetté

Episode : Free Falling
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Background to the Fouetté

Below you will find some tips on the role of each member of your group and what they need to do:

Underneath each role, next to the ✓ write an example of what a good researcher/historian/illustrator/teacher might do and next to the X write an example of what they shouldn't do.

Researchers

Find several good examples of fouettés online.

Find tips and instructions on performing a series of fouettés, compile notes and hand these over to the teacher in your group.

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- X _____
- X _____

Historians

Find the names of ballets where a dancer would perform 16-32 fouettés in succession.

Find the names of the dancers who are famous for their fouettés.

Find reviews and comments about their performance of fouettés.

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- X _____
- X _____

Illustrators

Generate lots of images of the fouetté from lots of sources.

Creatively represent the fouetté in a poster format.

✓ _____

✓ _____

x _____

x _____

Teachers

Prepare a lesson to teach to the class on the topic 'Fantastic Fouettés'.

Ensure that all students are safe while learning to fouetté

✓ _____

✓ _____

x _____

x _____