

Episode 24: Heatwave

Clip: Nutcracker

Activity: The Nutcracker Ballet

Theme: Dance skills

1. As a class, view the clip, *Nutcracker*, where The National Academy of Dance is preparing to present the ballet, *The Nutcracker*, for the end of year performance. This ballet was first performed in 1892 in the Mariinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg. It was created by two Russian choreographers, Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov, with music by Pyotr Tchaikovsky (the team who were also responsible for the ballet, *Swan Lake*). The Nutcracker was traditionally performed at Christmas and is a story about a girl, Clara, who falls asleep on Christmas Eve. She is involved in a nightmarish war between the mice and the gingerbread men soldiers. She saves the Nutcracker Soldier (who is really a prince) and together they take a marvelous journey to the land of sweets, ruled by the Sugar Plum Fairy. The Sugar Plum Fairy orders a grand celebration for Clara which features chocolate from Spain, coffee from Africa, tea from China, Danish marzipan - all represented by dances of each country. The feast is concluded by the crowning of Clara and her prince as rulers of "Confiturembourg."
2. As a class, watch an original and complete performance of *The Nutcracker* on DVD/online. Alternatively, if possible, see a live performance. There are usually performances around Christmas time by The Australian Ballet Company, The Dancers' Company, The Queensland Ballet Company, Western Australian Ballet Company or dance schools throughout the country.
3. Have students research *The Nutcracker* ballet. They should find images of, or draw the characters, outline the plot, the program of scenes and acts, notes on the scenery and costumes particular to the ballet production.
4. Once students have completed their research, they should use this information to design a performance program for a night at the ballet. Students should include information to create as comprehensive a program as possible and even attempt a review of the ballet.
5. Distribute **Student Activity Sheet E24.1: The Nutcracker Ballet** for the class to draft their ideas and complete their research.

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Download

- Student Activity Sheet E24.1: The Nutcracker Ballet

Useful resources

- [*Reviews of The Australian Ballet performance of The Nutcracker*](#)
- [Highlight Video of the Australian Ballet's Nutcracker performance](#)
- Video: [Props Set and Magic of Peter Wright's Nutcracker](#)



NAME:

Student Activity
Sheet:
Activity:

E24.1
The
Nutcracker
Ballet

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The Nutcracker Ballet

After watching a version of 'The Nutcracker'

List the characters here:	Name the different dances here:

Now write down the main parts of the story for each act here:

Using the information gathered, your task is to write a short version of 'The Nutcracker' story. Write your short version of 'The Nutcracker' below. Imagine this will be included in a program that is handed out to all of the audience members.

The story of 'The Nutcracker'.