



THE REIF

STUDY GUIDE



ABOUT THE REIF

The Reif Center is more than a building.

With two auditoriums, four studio classrooms, an art gallery, and multiple practice rooms, it provides access for people of all ages to explore and exhibit their artistic talents.

The Reif Arts Council proudly produces Reif Education programming including Reif Dance and Theatre Education.

The Reif Center is home to the Grand Rapids Players and the Itasca Orchestra and Strings program. It is the venue for concerts of school bands and choirs.

The lobby gallery is curated by MacRostie Art Center and exhibits professional artists' work as well as multiple student showcases from area schools each year.

In addition to supporting all of these regional programs, the Reif presents a series of events each year, bringing theatre, dance, and music from around the world to our community.



GOING TO THE THEATER

Please encourage your children to visit the rest rooms before the show begins. It is disruptive to visit the rest rooms during a live performance.

We recommend that you provide your children with some guidelines of things to look at and listen for during the performance.

“Going to the Theatre Watching a live performance is very different than watching television or going to the movies. When you see a live performance you play a part too! Your role is an audience member. As an audience member you should obey the following instructions. . . (You may also want to encourage your children to add to this list.)”

Children should be encouraged to:

- A. Watch the performers.
- B. Listen to the music.
- C. Look at the costumes and set designs.
- D. Laugh when they see the performers do something funny.
- E. Clap to show the performers that they are enjoying the performance when the performance has finished. It is customary to applaud when the performers take a bow.

Children should be encouraged NOT to:

- A. Talk or make noise because they might miss something important.
- B. Chew gum or eat because it is disruptive to others and makes a mess at the theater.
- C. Leave their seats before the lights go on because this is very distracting to their neighbors.
- D. Bring phones in the theater because this is disruptive to the dancers and other members of the audience.

WHOSE PORTRAIT IS HANGING IN THE LOBBY?



MYLES REIF

Myles Reif, for whom the center is named, was a former president of Blandin Paper Company who believed in investing in the arts and education. Thanks to his contributions, there is a place for generations of artists to develop and share their craft.



LOIS GILDEMEISTER

The first director of the Reif Center was Lois Gildemeister, who was the greatest champion for the creation of a performing arts center in Grand Rapids. It was Lois' determination and vision that lead the community to come together and realize this dream.

THE STORY OF THE NUTCRACKER

ACT I THE PARTY

Our story opens on a cold winter night within the home of the Stahlbaum family. Dr. and Mrs. Stahlbaum trim the Christmas tree getting ready for their big Christmas party. Their children, Fritz and Clara, see the tree for the first time when they are invited down to add an ornament. The maids tell them that it is time for the guests to arrive and mom and dad make sure that everything is in place.

When the guests arrive, the family greets them one by one. When their mysterious uncle Drosselmeyer arrives, the children are excited and a bit nervous. He is a toy maker who creates magical toys that come to life and can sometimes be a bit frightening. His magical puppets, dolls and toy soldiers dance and delight the children.

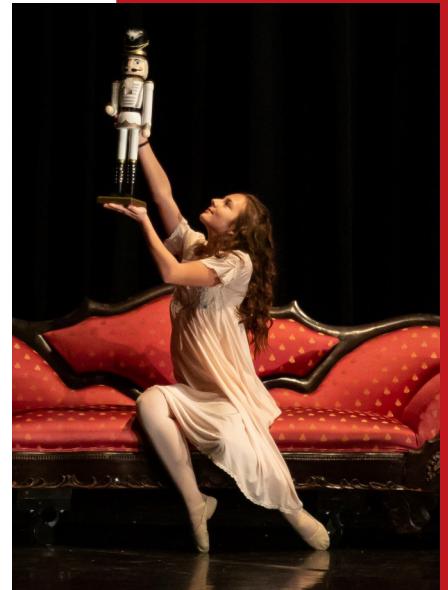
Drosselmeyer's final gift is presented to his beloved niece, Clara; a beautiful Nutcracker that she and her friends all enjoy. Fritz, jealous of Clara's marvelous gift, fights with his sister for the Nutcracker which results in the Nutcracker being tragically broken in two. A devastated Clara begins to cry.

Herr Drosselmeyer magically repairs the Nutcracker and the girls play with their new dolls. Fritz (who has gotten hold of a stuffed rat) leads the boys in a series of stealthy attacks, which takes the girls by surprise, startling them and creating more chaos!

Once the parents get the children settled down, they have a toast to celebrate the evening. The guests say their goodbyes and make their way home. With everyone in bed, the house falls silent... That is, until Clara sneaks downstairs to curl up with her Nutcracker on the couch.

Is It A Dream?

Clara drifts to sleep, but is roused by the sound of little mice scurrying about the great room when suddenly the Rat Queen appears. Clara believes in the magical powers of her Nutcracker doll and she uses it to drive away the Rat Queen as the clock strikes midnight. Just then, giant rats seem to come from everywhere and Clara tries to escape, but finds herself trapped. Herr Drosselmeyer comes just in time to rescue her and magically turns the Nutcracker doll into a life-size commander so that he and his toy soldier army can battle the rats. While the Nutcracker and the Rat Queen are fighting, the Nutcracker loses his sword and it seems all is lost. In a moment of bravery, Clara jumps onto the Rat Queen's back, steals her crown and tosses it to the Nutcracker. As she does this, the Rat queen loses her power and the Nutcracker is transformed into a beautiful prince. In deep gratitude for saving his life and making him human, the prince and Drosselmeyer give Clara the magical crown in a great coronation. She is then taken in a beautiful sleigh through a snowy forest to meet the Snow Queen and her dancing snowflakes. The Snow Queen and Uncle Drosselmeyer then lead her through the forest to the Land of Sweets.





ACT II THE LAND OF THE SWEETS

Clara enters the warm and delectable Land of Sweets and is led to two thrones where she and her Nutcracker Prince are seated. They are greeted, one by one, by the different sweets that have gathered from across the lands; rich chocolate from Spain, exotic coffee from the lands of Arabia, delicious cookies from Russia, effervescent tea from the Far East, and sweet almond marzipan from the Hills of Europe. With them are two beautiful fairies, one of them made of pure morning dew, who dances with her beautiful flowers and the other of sweet sugarplums. The Sugarplum Fairy is the queen of the Land of Sweets, and has gathered all of the different treats to dance for their honored guests.



When the dancing comes to an end, the Sugarplum fairy tells Clara that it is time to return the magical crown and go home. Once she returns the crown, the spell is broken. Everything fades and Clara awakens on the couch clutching her beloved Nutcracker.

Was it all just a dream?

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Can you identify the lands which sent sweets to greet Clara?



Spain



Arabia



Russia



The Far East



The Hills of Europe



HISTORY OF THE NUTCRACKER BALLET



Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky



E.T.A Hoffman



Alexandre Dumas

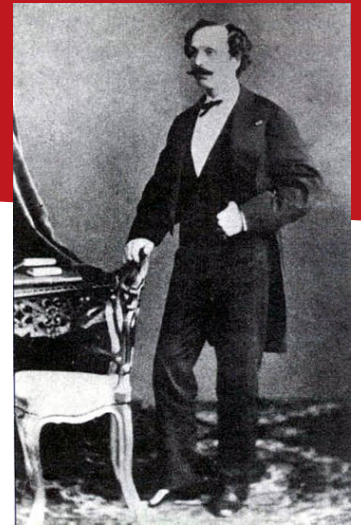
The ballet The Nutcracker is over 100 years old. It was first presented at the Mayinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia on December 17, 1892. The famous Russian composer Peter (or Pyotr) Tchaikovsky was commissioned by the renowned choreographer Marius Petipa to compose a ballet score based on Alexandre Dumas's adaptation of E.T.A. Hoffman's tale "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King."

The composer and choreographer had previously collaborated on Sleeping Beauty. Sadly, Petipa became ill and his assistant Lev Ikonov had to finalize the choreography for the ballet.

The first production of The Nutcracker was a failure: neither critics nor the audience liked it. However, future productions proved more popular.

The San Francisco Ballet Company was the first company to perform The Nutcracker in the United States. Their 1944 production was directed by William Christensen. The idea for the San Francisco version came from the memories of a teacher in the ballet company named George Balanchine who remembered a dance he performed in Russia as a child.

However, it is master choreographer George Balanchine who is credited with bringing new life to The Nutcracker. He also had danced in The Nutcracker as a child in Russia. In 1954 he mounted a production of The Nutcracker for the New York City Ballet. It is this production that paved the way for the popularity of The Nutcracker and its status as a holiday tradition.



Marius Petipa



Lev Ivanov

VOCABULARY AND NAMES TO KNOW

Adaptation: altering or modifying an existing story

Choreography: the series of steps and movements performed by the dancers

Composer: a person who writes music

Score: the written form of a musical composition

Clara: the little girl who receives the Nutcracker as her Christmas gift

Dr. & Mrs. Stahlbaum: Clara's Parents

Fritz: Clara's Brother

Herr Drosselmeyer: Clara's Mysterious Uncle

Sugar Plum Fairy: Queen of the Land of the Sweets

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky: composer of the Nutcracker Ballet

Marius Petipa: choreographer of original Nutcracker production

Lev Ivanov: Petipa's Assistant

E.T.A Hoffman: author of "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King"

Alexandre Dumas: writer who adapted Hoffman's story into the tale we know today

IDEAS FOR INTEGRATING THE NUTCRACKER BALLET INTO YOUR ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

Language Arts:

- Introduce the concept of adaptation. Read different versions of The Nutcracker. Discuss the similarities and differences. Compare The Nutcracker with other popular tales that have been retold in many ways.
- Write your own version of The Nutcracker story that begins in your neighborhood in the year 2019 (or any other time and place you choose).
- Write a letter to one of the characters or dancers from the Nutcracker. Use sensory details to describe what they liked best about the performance and the character they chose.

History/Social Studies/Geography:

- Study the customs, architecture, economic structure, attire, modes of transportation, etc. used during the time period (Romantic Period, late 19th c.) in which The Nutcracker ballet is set.
- Many of the special treats presented to Clara came from what were considered exotic places in the 19th century. Explore where chocolate, tea, marzipan, and coffee come from and why these were such special treats during that time period.
- Locate Russia, Spain, Arabia, and China on a current map and a map from the 1890's. Do their boundaries differ? Explore various aspects of each culture both now and in the 19th century.

Science:

- Study the science involved in stagecraft. For example, how does the electricity in the stage lights work? How does the pulley system for scenery work?

Music:

- Study orchestral instruments and listen for them in a recording of Tchaikovsky's score. Discuss the ways that the different instruments help to characterize the different moods of each scene or help to characterize the dancers such as the Rat Queen, Russian dance, Chinese dance, etc.
- Study different rhythms used in the music for The Nutcracker, such as the waltz and the march. Identify these sections in a recording of the music—listen and clap along!
- Listen to and compare different versions of The Nutcracker score, including:

Tchaikovsky: The Nutcracker Suite, Op. 71a <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hD8JX7Kn6Tw>

Brian Setzer's Nutcracker Suite <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IP94EYlcqko>

Dance Of The Sugar Plum Fairy (Trap Remix) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mnfuVIFUC8>

Keith Emerson Band NUTCRACKER / Nutrocker <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30U5Uyg2Wp8>

Visual Art:

- Compare and contrast various storybook illustrations of The Nutcracker with the actual sets used in the ballet. Which do you think are more effective and why?
- Imagine you could create your own production of The Nutcracker ballet that would take place in any time period you choose—past, present, or future. What type of scenery and costumes would you use for your pro-duction of the ballet? Draw pictures or create dioramas and paper dolls of your designs.
- Imagine you are a designer: draw or paint your own costumes and scenery for any section of the ballet you choose.



NUTCRACKER WORD-SEARCH

A C W I S V N U T C R A C K E R
T Q K F P G Q C L A R M L B C V
C L A R A Z F E J B X N I A D D
H R R A N V Y E L N Q S F L J R
A D A O I S E L B U Y E R L Z O
I X T L S T O Y S O L D I E R S
K O Q R H F C B O Y S O R T E S
O S U G A R P L U M F A I R Y E
V L E C H I N E S E C F J K O L
S Y E H D T F L O W E R S Z U M
K M N U P Z B E C Q U X T Y N E
Y Q I U G A R A B I A N K P O Y
A S P A Z V Y M A R Z I P A N E
M H P L F Z R V M Y D B D O S R

Find these words:

ARABIAN

BALLET

CHINESE

CLARA

DROSSELMAYER

FRITZ

FLOWERS

MARZIPAN

NUTCRACKER

RATQUEEN

SPANISH

SUGARPLUM FAIRY

TCHAIKOVSKY

TOYSOLDIERS

