



Teacher's Guide Grades 1-8

The Nutcracker



This guide has been compiled to assist with the integration of *The Nutcracker* into the Ontario Curriculum.

A selection of worksheets has been included for several of the activities discussed in this guide.

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Some activity titles have been highlighted with ***asterisks***. It is highly recommended that these activities be carried out so that students may receive maximal educational benefit and enjoyment from the performance.

Reading the Curriculum Connections

Curriculum connections have been indicated in the following format: 2s7.

The first number indicator specifies the grade level of the curriculum expectation (1-8). The following letter indicates the subject area of the expectation within the Ontario Curriculum (a = arts; e = English language; m = mathematics; p = physical education and health; ss = social studies; st = science and technology). The final number denotes the number of the Specific Expectation within the indicated document of the Ontario Curriculum.



Introductory Activities

The following are a selection of introductory activities that will familiarize students with aspects of the performance that they will see.

Language Arts: Story Familiarity

Read a version of *The Nutcracker* to the class. Encourage students to relate the story to other stories that they are familiar with. In addition, encourage students to relate aspects of *The Nutcracker* to their own lives

Dance and Drama: What Is A Ballet?

Discuss what a ballet is. Are there speaking parts? How is a story told? Who decides how the dancers tell the story? How do the dancers learn their parts?

Dance and Drama: Audience Etiquette

Students should be introduced to basic audience etiquette before attending the performance. Some important things to remember include the following:

- Remain seated throughout the performance so that everyone can see
- Remain quiet so as to not distract the dancers and fellow audience members
- Clap politely at the end of a performance

Art, Language Arts & Music: Listen, Draw, and Write Worksheet Included

Play selections of music from *The Nutcracker* by Tchaikovsky, for the class. Ask the students to draw images that go along with the music. Then, have students write 2 or 3 sentences about what the music sounds like and what the music makes them think about. Some recommended excerpts include: Overture, March, Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, Trepak, Waltz of the Flowers. This activity can be done as an introductory activity using 3 selections of music. This activity can also be done as a follow-up activity using 3 significant selections corresponding to peak moments of the ballet. [See Worksheet on page 22]

Dance: Basic Ballet Steps

Introduce a small sample of commonly used steps to the class. Some familiarity with basic steps will provide students of all ages reference points through which to enjoy the performance. Some impressive steps that are used frequently in ballet performances include:

Pirouettes: turns, sometimes consisting of several revolutions, performed by both male and female dancers

Pas de deux: a dance for two dancers, usually one female and one male.

Bourrées: tiny rapid steps performed by female dancers while *en pointe* that give the illusion of floating above the ground

Grande Jeté: an impressive split leap performed by both male and female dancers

Mathematics: Shape and Line Geometry, and Patterning

Discuss a variety of shapes and line patterns that are frequently used in ballet choreography. Some line patterns include diagonal lines, parallel lines, perpendicular lines, grid formation, and staggered formation. Some shape formations include circular, square, triangular (or angled), hexagonal and pentagonal. Sometimes, formations may also resemble an object like a flower, a bicycle wheel, or a snowflake. Students can watch for a variety of these patterns and formations throughout the performance.

Visual Art: Colour

After gaining familiarity with the story of *The Nutcracker*, students can predict what they think the production might look like. The use of different colours in the sets, costumes, and props can create very different moods. Students can watch for colours throughout the performance.

Picture Books

Hayden, Melissa. *The Nutcracker Ballet*. Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1992.

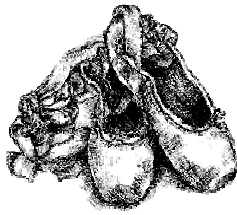
Newman, Barbara. *The Illustrated Book of Ballet Stories*. Bolton: Fenn Publishing Company, Ltd., 1997.

Tennant, Veronica. *The Nutcracker*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985.

Vagin, Vladimir. *The Nutcracker Ballet*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1995.

Music

Tchaikovsky, Pyotr Ilyich. *The Nutcracker*, op.71a.



Follow-Up Activities

Listed below are a variety of follow-up activities that are based on the performance of *The Nutcracker*. Accompanying each activity is a list of curriculum connections that correspond with the expectations outlined in the Ontario Curriculum documents. Choose the activities that best meet the needs of your class.

Social Studies: Setting (Grades 1-8)

Worksheet Included

This production of *The Nutcracker* has been set in 19th century Russia. How would the ballet change if *The Nutcracker* were to be set in:

- Grade 1: The Local Community (1ss3, 1ss4, 1ss9, 1ss10)
- Grade 2: Communities around the World (2ss1, 2ss2, 2ss3, 2ss4, 2ss8, 2ss11)
- Grade 3: Pioneer Times (3ss2, 3ss6, 3ss10, 3ss11, 3ss12)
- Grade 4: Medieval Times (4ss1, 4ss2, 4ss3, 4ss7, 4ss8)
- Grade 5: Early Civilizations (5ss1, 5ss2, 5ss3, 5ss5, 5ss8, 5ss11, 5ss15)

Suggestion: Cover all early civilizations by assigning one civilization per group - share all findings via oral presentation

- Grade 6: Early Canada (Explorers and First Settlers) (6ss4)
- Grade 7: New France (7ss2, 7ss4, 7ss8)
- Grade 8: Developing Western Canada (8ss2)

Would the costumes be different? Would the sets be different? Consider what life would be like in the era. Would celebrations and dancing occur as it has in this production of *The Nutcracker*? [See Worksheet on page 12.]

Social Studies: Canadian Setting (Grades 1-8)

Worksheet Included

For this production of *The Nutcracker*, the ballet has been set in Russia. If you were to choreograph a production of *The Nutcracker* to be set in Canada, what would change? (costumes, sets, characters, folk dances, landmarks, locations, events, animals, etc.). [See Worksheet on page 12]

(Social Studies: This activity covers a variety of expectations within Social Studies, History, and Geography for students in grades 1-8.)

Social Studies: Climate (Grade 2)

Worksheet Included

Does the Snowflake scene in *The Nutcracker* remind you of winter in Canada? How do people dress in this kind of weather? What would people do in this kind of weather? Draw a picture of how you would dress in this weather, then write a few sentences about what you would be doing. [See Worksheet on page 13]

(Canada and World Connections: 2ss5, 2ss8, 2ss21, 2ss22)

Social Studies: Holiday Celebrations (Grade 2)**Worksheet Included**

In Act I of *The Nutcracker*, Marie, Misha, their family and friends are engaged in a Christmas Eve celebration. Do you and your family celebrate Christmas Eve? If you do, how is your celebration similar or different from the celebration that you saw on stage? If you do not celebrate Christmas Eve, do you and your family celebrate another holiday in the winter? How do you celebrate? How is your celebration similar or different from what you saw in the ballet? Compare and discuss as a class. Chart findings. [See Worksheet on page 14.]

(Heritage and Citizenship: 2ss2, 2ss3, 2ss5, 2ss6, 2ss11, 2ss12, 2ss13, 2ss14, 2ss15, 2ss16, 2ss20)

Music: Orchestration (Grades 1-8)

The original music for *The Nutcracker* was not composed for chorus. In this production of *The Nutcracker*, a children's chorus joined the National Ballet Orchestra. Why do you think that a children's chorus was chosen instead of an adult chorus? Do you feel that the addition of voices enhanced the performance? Why do you think that a chorus was introduced at all? How do the voices change the mood of the performance?

(Music: 1a6, 1a17, 1a19, 1a20; 2a19, 2a20, 2a21, 2a22; 3a14, 3a16; 4a8, 4a23, 4a24; 5a8, 5a17; 6a7; 7a16, 7a23, 7a24, 7a26; 8a18)

Drama: Tableau (Grades 1-8)

In groups of 3 or 4, use body shape and space to show a concept frozen in time (tableau). This activity can be carried out with a read-aloud of *The Nutcracker* with pauses inserted for the formation of tableaux. Discuss the visual effect of the tableau performances after allowing time for sharing student sequences.

Variation: Have each group mix up their tableau sequence. The audience must then sequence the tableaux in a way that makes sense to the plot.

Variation: Have students create meaningful transitions between each tableau to form a cohesive composition.

(Drama and Dance: 1a4, 1a6; 2a1, 2a4, 2a10, 2a17; 3a2, 3a4, 3a13, 3a16; 4a2, 4a3, 4a8, 4a11, 4a16; 5a2, 5a3, 5a5, 5a10, 5a16, 5a17; 6a2, 6a18; 7a1, 7a3, 7a6; 8a4, 8a6, 8a15, 8a17)

Drama, Dance & Oral/Visual Communications: Ceremonies (Grades 1-8)

Create a brief dance or speech to present to Marie and Misha at the feast celebrating their courage for helping the Nutcracker, and for defeating the Tsar of the Mice. This activity can be done alone, in pairs, or in small groups.

Variation: Dances can be choreographed individually but performed simultaneously, in small groups, if desired. Interesting compositional elements may surface if dance performances are carried out this way.

(Drama and Dance: For grades 1-8, there are many curriculum connections for both drama and dance)

(Oral and Visual Communication: 1e2, 1e3, 1e7, 1e8; 2e1, 2e2, 2e3, 2e5, 2e6; 3e1, 3e3, 3e4, 3e5, 3e6; 4e2, 4e3, 4e4; 5e2, 5e4, 5e5, 5e6; 6e1, 6e2, 6e4; 7e5, 7e6, 7e7; 8e4, 8e5.)

Language Arts: Story Adaptations (Grades 1-8)

Worksheet Included

Read a version of *The Nutcracker* aloud (i.e. retold by Veronica Tennant). The version of *The Nutcracker* that you have read is slightly different from what you saw in the ballet. Chart the differences that you notice. This can be done in the form of a Venn diagram. [See Worksheet on page 15.]

(Reading: 1e6; 2e3; 3e2, 3e6; 4e1, 4e2, 4e7; 5e1, 5e3, 5e4; 6e5; 7e4, 7e9; 8e4.)

Language Arts: Compare and Contrast (Grades 1-8)

Worksheet Included

Compare *The Nutcracker* with the stories of *The Ugly Duckling* or *The Wizard of Oz*. Compare and contrast the two stories from a variety of angles: transformation, dream, journey, recurring characters, the problem, the resolution, etc. The results can be discussed and charted within a Venn diagram. [See Worksheet pg. 15]

(Reading: 1e6; 2e3; 3e2, 3e6; 4e1, 4e2, 4e7; 5e1, 5e3, 5e4; 6e5; 7e4, 7e9; 8e4.)

Language Arts: Cloze Passage (Grades 1-8)

Worksheet Included

Use the "fill-in-the-blank" passage as a comprehension exercise. This can be done together as a class for younger primary grades. A variety of additional tasks can be built into this one exercise. [See Worksheet on page 16.]

Variation: Parts of Speech - Students can underline each example of a specified part of speech (i.e. all of the nouns, verbs, etc.) that occurs in the passage.

Variation: Synonyms and Antonyms - Students may provide either a synonym or an antonym for each example of a specified part of speech (i.e. verbs, adjectives, adverbs) to create a more vivid description.

Variation: Syllables - Have students underline all words in the passage that have 2 syllables, etc. (Grade 3 and up)

(Writing: 1e8, 1e9; 2e1, 2e4, 2e7, 2e9, 2e13; 3e2, 3e9, 3e13; 4e2, 4e11, 4e12; 5e10; 6e2, 6e8; 7e1, 7e11; 8e10.) (Reading: 1e2, 1e4, 1e9, 1e11; 2e3, 2e6, 2e10, 2e11; 3e5, 3e9, 3e11; 4e11, 4e12, 4e13, 4e14, 4e15; 5e9, 5e10, 5e11, 5e12; 6e10, 6e11, 6e12; 7e10, 7e11; 8e10, 8e11.)

Language Arts: Parts of Speech (Grades 2-4)

Select one part of speech for students to act out every time it occurs in a read-aloud of *The Nutcracker* (i.e. nouns, or verbs, or adjectives, or adverbs). Nouns, and an introduction to adjectives are particularly good for the Grade 2 level. Verbs and an introduction to adjectives and adverbs are useful for Grade 3. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are all excellent for Grade 4.

(Writing, Grammar: 2e1, 2e4; 3e1, 3e2; 4e2)

Language Arts: Antonyms (Grades 4, 5 & 7)

Have students act out the opposite of an adjective or adverb when it is stated in a read-aloud of the story of *The Nutcracker*. Note how the insertion of antonyms changes the meaning and the mood of the story. Discuss some of the antonyms to investigate their impact on the passage.

(Writing, Word use and Vocabulary Building: 4e11; 5e10; 7e11)

Language Arts: Synonyms (Grades 3-8)

Come up with a list of a few alternate words that could be used in place of key nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. in the story of *The Nutcracker*. Can you choose words that give a more vivid description than the original words? A thesaurus may be consulted as a tool for students to broaden their vocabulary. Attempt to enhance the descriptions in the excerpts.

(Writing, Grammar & Word Use and Vocabulary Building: 3e13; 4e9, 4e11, 4e13, 5e10; 6e2, 6e8; 7e11; 8e10)

Language Arts: Retelling the Story (Grades 1-8)***Worksheet Included***

In this production of *The Nutcracker*, some details are slightly different from the original story of *The Nutcracker* as it was originally written by E.T.A. Hoffmann. This happens often as part of the art of storytelling. Try retelling the story of *The Nutcracker* in your own words and write a journal entry about what you notice about your version of the story. If desired, the story can be adapted for presentation in another form (i.e. a play, a poem, a dance, a song, etc.). [See Worksheet on page 17.] (Language Arts: This activity satisfies several expectations for all grades, 1-8, in the areas of Writing, Reading, and Oral and Visual Communication in Language Arts, as well as in Drama, depending on the final product produced.)

Math: Transformations (Grades 2-3)

Ask one student to freeze in a pose from *The Nutcracker*. Ask another student to take a position that is a reflection, rotation, or translation of the original pose. The whole class can participate together to create a transformational geometry *corps de ballet*-like formation. Scenes to emulate may include the party scene, or the dance with the snowflakes.

(Geometry and Spatial Sense: 2m13, 2m15; 3m14, 3m15)

Math: Transformations (Grades 4-7)

In response to a scene in *The Nutcracker*, students freeze in a tableau that satisfies certain requirements. Share compositions with the class to determine whether or not all criteria were met - allow students to lead the discussion.

Some ideas:

- 1) Freeze at the moment that Marie receives the Nutcracker from Nikolai. There must be two reflections and one translation in your tableau.

- 2) Freeze during the battle of between the Tsar of the Mice and the Nutcracker. There must be at least one reflection, one rotation, and one transformation in your tableau.
- 3) Freeze during the Dance of the Snowflakes. There must be two translations and one rotation in your tableau.
- 4) Freeze at the moment that The Sugar Plum Fairy makes her entrance. There must be one translation and one reflection in your tableau.

(Geometry and Spatial Sense: 4m14, 4m15; 5m17; 6m17, 6m18; 7m9, 7m10, 7m13)

Math: Angles (Grades 4-6)

Create a series of tableaux that satisfy certain angle specifications. These requirements may refer to the tableau as a whole, or to the position of each individual in the tableau. Discuss compositions as a class to determine how successfully the criteria were met.

Some ideas:

- 1) Recreate the scene where Nikolai first arrives at the Christmas Eve party. The tableau must be formed at an obtuse angle. Each person in the tableau must have one leg bent at a right angle.
- 2) Recreate the scene where Marie and Misha have just defeated the Tsar of the Mice. Two people must have their arms at acute angles. The rest of the participants must show at least one obtuse angle.
- 3) Recreate the food fight scene. Create the scene at a right angle. Each participant must show one of each of an obtuse angle, a right angle, and an acute angle in their body positions.

(Geometry and Spatial Sense: 4m9, 4m10, 4m11; 5m6, 5m13; 6m10, 6m13, 6m14)

Mathematics: Find the Math (Grade 4-8)

Worksheet Included

Ballet choreography, including the choreography of *The Nutcracker* by James Kudelka is filled with mathematics. List as many mathematical concepts as you can that can be found in the creation, the staging, or the performance of *The Nutcracker*. The recognition of mathematics applied in real-world situations is the focus of this exercise. [See Worksheet on page 18.]

(Mathematics: Aspects of all 5 Mathematics strands can be covered through this exercise)

Science: Habitat (Grade 4)

Worksheet Included

Consider the Dance of the Snowflakes scene in *The Nutcracker*. What animals might you expect to find living in this kind of habitat? What else would you likely find living in this habitat (plants, trees, insects, etc.)? [See Worksheet on page 19.]

(Life Systems: 4st1, 4st11, 4st13)

Science, Social Studies and Visual Art: Castles (Grade 4) *Worksheet Included*

Design a medieval-style castle that might be found in the Kingdom of the Sugar Plum Fairy. Draw a picture of your design, then make your design using "found"

materials provided by the teacher (recycled items like fabric scraps, yarn, wire, wood scraps, cardboard, paper, plastercine, film canisters, buttons, spools, etc. work very well for students to produce imaginative structures). The inclusion of a pulley system for a drawbridge can fulfill several requirements for the science and technology Structures and Mechanisms strand while integrating the social studies topic of Medieval Times. Encourage students to discuss what they would produce if there were no restrictions or limitations such as material availability, tool availability, etc. [See Worksheet on page 20]

Variation: Construct as a medieval gingerbread castle.

(Structures and Mechanisms: 4st10, 4st11, 4st12, 4st15, 4st20)

(Social Studies: 4ss7, 4ss13)

(Visual Art: 4a6, 4a7, 4a9, 4a10, 4a11)

Science & Visual Art: Ice-Boat Design (Grades 1-3 & 5) *Worksheet Included*

The Snow Queen gave Misha, Marie and the Nutcracker an ice-boat to enable them to proceed on their journey to the Kingdom of the Sugar Plum Fairy. Design, and then make an ice-boat that will carry the three courageous passengers to their destination. Draw a picture of your design, then make your design using "found" materials provided by the teacher (recycled items like fabric scraps, yarn, wire, wood scraps, cardboard, paper, plastercine, film canisters, buttons, spools, etc. work very well for students to produce imaginative structures). Grade 1's may focus on discovering how various materials and mechanisms can enhance their product. Encourage Grade 1's to discuss their creations in terms of what they have created and how their creation was made. Grade 2's may focus on the inclusion of various simple mechanisms in their product. Grade 3 and Grade 5 students may focus on the stability of their structure, constructing the ice-boat so that it may carry a load. [See Worksheet on page 21.]

(Structures and Mechanisms: 1st6, 1st12, 1st13, 1st16; 2st10, 2st11, 2st12, 2st13; 3st11, 3st13, 3st14, 3st16, 3st17, 3st18; 5st12.)

(Visual Art: 1a8, 1a9, 1a10, 1a11; 2a9, 2a10; 3a7, 3a9, 3a10; 5a8, 5a10, 5a11)

Science, Dance & Language Arts: Animal Movement (Grades 1-5)

In theatre and dance, humans can portray animals by paying close attention to movement quality. Certain animals have specific characteristic ways of moving. Activity 1: Think of an animal. Write three words that describe how this animal moves using adjectives, adverbs, and descriptive verbs. Use these three words in a sentence that explains how the animal moves. Activity 2: The teacher chooses an animal. The class explores how this animal might move. Divide the class in half so that half explore movement and half watch, then switch roles. Discuss how the class would describe the movement of the particular animal. Generate a list of adjectives and adverbs for each animal. Some animals that appear in *The Nutcracker* include a horse, mice, cats, dogs, a bee and bears.

(Science: 1st4; 2st-many) (Dance: 1a5, 1a7, 1a8; 2a7, 2a11, 2a16; 3a5; 4a5; 5a9, 5a11) (Writing: 1e1, 1e8; 2e4, 2e13; 3e2, 3e13; 4e2, 4e3, 4e12; 5e8, 5e10)

Healthy Living & Social Studies: Families (Grades 1-8)

Misha and Marie are the brother and sister in *The Nutcracker*. How do they get along at the beginning of the ballet (Act I)? How do they get along at the end of the ballet (Act II)? Why do you think their relationship changed? (Some Answers: At the beginning of the ballet, Marie and Misha fight quite frequently; at the end of the ballet, Marie and Misha are able to get along together very well. Their relationship may have changed for many reasons. Marie and Misha experienced something together that was very exciting. Common interests and experiences may help family members grow closer together. *The Nutcracker* is also a ballet about growing up. Often relationships within a family will improve over time.)

(Healthy Living: 4p4, 4p5,; 5p5, 5p6; 6p5; 7a7)

(Heritage and Citizenship: 1ss1, 1ss7, 1ss9, 1ss17)



Name: _____ Date: _____

The Nutcracker: Climate

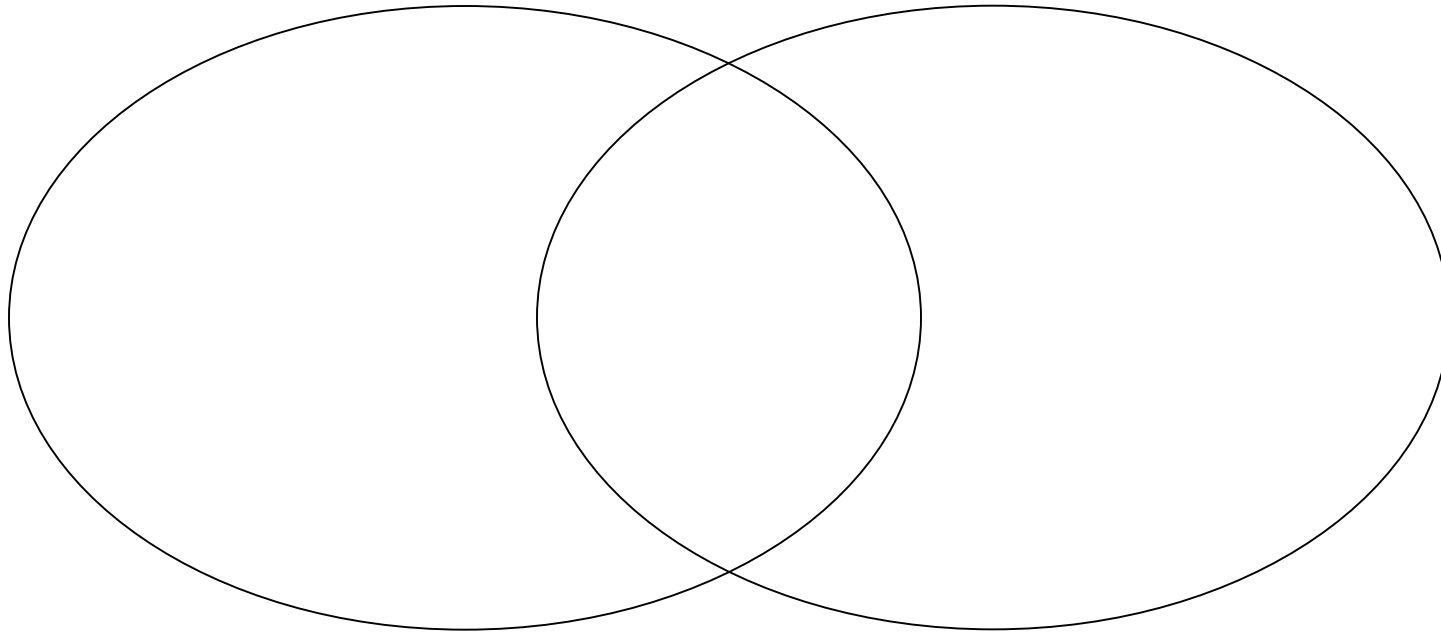


Does the Snowflake scene in *The Nutcracker* remind you of winter in Canada? How do people dress in this kind of weather? What would people do in this kind of weather? Draw a picture of how you would dress in this weather. Then, write a few sentences about what you would be doing.

Name: _____ Date: _____



The Nutcracker: Compare and Contrast



Name: _____ Date: _____



The Nutcracker Act I: The Adventure Begins



Fill in the blanks with words from the Word Bank below.

Marie and Misha's _____ begin to shake and the children wake up to find that their Christmas tree has come to life and the _____ has grown. Other toys have also come to life and an _____ group of mice enter the room. The horrible _____ challenges the Nutcracker to fight. Marie and _____ save the Nutcracker by conquering the Tsar of the Mice with their _____. Exhausted, the children _____ on their beds, but the beds begin to move again, taking them on a _____ journey. The Nutcracker, Misha, and _____ encounter the snowflakes and the _____ with whom they dance. The Snow Queen gives them an _____ that will carry the Nutcracker and the children to the Kingdom of the _____.

WORD BANK

Tsar of the Mice	pillows	Marie	beds
Misha	Nutcracker	ice-boat	
magical	evil	collapse	
Snow Queen	Sugar Plum Fairy		

Name: _____ Date: _____



The Nutcracker: Retelling The Story









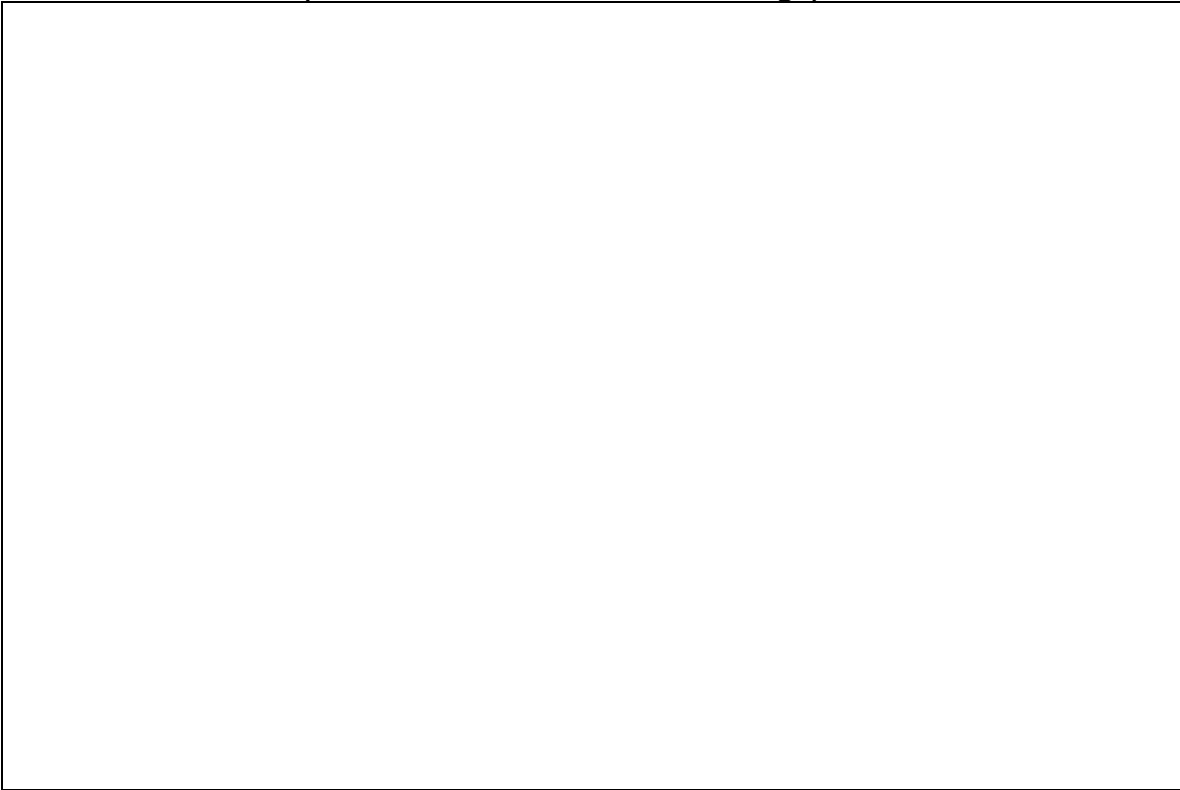


Name: _____ Date: _____

The Nutcracker Act II: Simple Machines

Design and make an ice-boat to allow Misha, Marie, and the Nutcracker to continue on their journey to the Kingdom of the Sugar Plum Fairy.

1. Draw a picture below before making your ice-boat.



2. Write a few sentences about your ice-boat design.

Name: _____

Date: _____



The Nutcracker: Draw and Write

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing a scene or character from the story.

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing a scene or character from the story.

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing a scene or character from the story.
