

# THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

### **STEAMDANCE Resource: Magnets**

*This pdf resource aligns with the video resource located on EduHub*

[www.australianballet.com.au/education-resources/steamdance-resource-case-studies](http://www.australianballet.com.au/education-resources/steamdance-resource-case-studies)

This resource outlines example activities that were used across 5 weeks, to develop a dance outcome based on the curricular theme "Magnetic Forces".

The students explored the idea of attraction and repulsion to influence their movements, forming patterns and formations based on the properties of magnets.

The students contributed their knowledge and ideas as they researched, physicalised and consolidated their learning. They were then supported to develop and refine their choreography by applying elements of dance.

#### **Warm-up relating to the theme**

The aim of a warm-up is to gently move through the range of joints, to wake up the body and to activate your muscles. Your heart rate, blood circulation and nerve impulse speed will increase, preventing injury and priming your body to support you.

A warm-up is a great place to start introducing the theme. For the theme of magnetic forces, try using movements in the warm-up that require a push or pull. Eg. jumping, push ups, burpees, arm movements that look like pulling.

For warm-up ideas visit

<https://australianballet.com.au/education-resources/classroom-warm-up-activities>

#### **Game exploring key concepts**

##### **Magnet Game**

Students form pairs and link one arm with their partner. They must move around as a pair, while maintaining their shoulder-to-shoulder position. A grouping of 2 or more students will be called a 'magnet'.

One student is the south pole of the magnet and the other student is the north pole of the magnet. As a class, decide on a hand signal that will represent south and one that will represent north and have students use this hand signal as they move about the room. Eg. using the Auslan sign for the letters 'S' and 'N' or making a positive (+) sign and a negative (-) sign with your hands.

As the students move around they can link arms with other magnets, as long as they are joining a north to a south. But if two of the same poles come in to contact (eg. a north heading towards another north), they are repelled away from each other. The students will be able to tell which pole another student is based on the hand signal they are displaying.

The aim of the game is to see how many mega magnets are left at the end and to see which magnet has the most people. Students must work together to move as one piece, in the same direction, without breaking. If a magnet breaks (by students unlinking their arms) those students will be out for the remainder of the round. If the whole class can become one mega magnet without breaking, that would be the ultimate win!

##### **Curriculum content descriptions.**

*Forces can be exerted by one object on another through direct contact or from a distance (ACSSU076).*

**Elaboration:** *exploring the forces of attraction and repulsion between magnets.*

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### Developing movement phrases

#### Movement phrase 1: Setting formations

Place students in parallel lines with their magnet partner, with the north side of the magnet on the right and the south on the left. The front pair of magnets begin to turn and walk towards the back of the room, and as they pass them, next magnet pair are forced to swing around due to the attraction and repulsion of the poles (eg. the south pole would be coming towards another south, so they spin around so that north and south can connect). The second pair then join up and this continues on until everyone is joined up in a long line at the back of the room. This movement phrase uses the ideas from the magnet game to create structure and formations. (You can see this at 22 seconds in the 'Magnetic Forces' video linked at the top of this resource.)



#### Movement phrase 2: Build a phrase

Brainstorm words that relate to magnetic forces. For example:

- Push
- Pull
- Attract
- Repel
- Stick
- Polar opposites

Select four of the most appropriate words and choreograph four movements to go with each word. The finished phrase will be a total of sixteen counts long.

#### Movement phrase 3: Small groups

Divide students into smaller groups of approximately three or four and task the students with creating their own dance phrase using those same four words. Encourage students to experiment with changing the speed, size or energy of the movements until they are happy with how it looks.

#### **Curriculum content descriptions.**

Perform dances using expressive skills to communicate ideas, including telling cultural or community stories ([ACADAM007](#)).

**Elaboration:** Considering viewpoints – meanings and interpretations: For example – Is there a story in the dance? How are you using grouping or pathways to communicate ideas or intentions in your dance?

**Elaboration:** exploring the elements of dance to communicate ideas clearly.

#### Movement phrase 4: Large group

Position students in a circle formation, crouched down to face each other. Then experiment with movements as a group that represent attraction and repulsion. Eg. Students windmill their arms outwards to represent repulsion and then windmill their arms in, representing attraction.

Simple movements performed by a large group in unison (at the same time) can often look very effective and powerful. This is a useful tool to bring interest and energy to the dance without making it too complicated.

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### Structure and form

Choices about where and when each phrase is performed are an important part of effective choreography. Below is how the example dance was structured. You can see snippets of this in the case study video.

1. Movement phrase 1 starts off the dance. After multiple magnets have joined up to make a line at the back of the room students transition into a semi-circle.
2. Movement phrase 3. The group keeps eyes focused on those who are dancing. The small group phrases are performed in the middle of the semi-circle. As each group is different, this section is quite chaotic and energetic!
3. Movement phrase 2 is performed in four parallel lines. This section of unison is powerful and energetic.
4. Movement phrase 4. Students change direction to face each other for the windmill action representing repulsion and attraction.
5. Ending position. A moment of stillness. Students create still positions out of their push and pull movements. Different levels are used to make the final position interesting and impactful.



### Cool down

Every session should finish with a cool down. Head to <https://australianballet.com.au/education-resources/classroom-warm-up-activities> for a cool down video. A cool down is comprised of 2–5 mins of gentle movements and light dynamic stretches.

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