



NUTCRACKERS

Script
by
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Based on a story by E. T. A. Hoffmann

Classroom Guide Kindergarten - Grade 1

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How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *Nutcrackers* is designed for Texas students in kindergarten and Grade 1. It offers activities to help you integrate a performance of *Nutcrackers* into English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, social studies, music, art, and theatre curricula.

All activities in this guide are linked to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) content standards.

For students outside Texas, this guide’s ELA and math activities also are linked to Common Core standards. At the back of this guide, you will find a list of the guide activities and their related Texas and Common Core standards.

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1: Discussion Questions

Before the Performance

Nutcrackers is a stage play. What is a stage play?

- How is a play similar to a TV show or movie?
- How is it different?

Who performs the parts (roles) in a play?

- What kinds of skills do you think performers need to have to perform in plays?
- Who else works on plays? (Remember: you may not see them on stage!)

Nutcrackers is based on a story called “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King,” written by E.T.A. Hoffmann.

- Have you read “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King” as a class or by yourself?
 - Based on what you read, what do you think may happen in the play?

During the Performance

When you watch a play, you are a member of the audience. What kinds of things should you do as an audience member? Examples:

- Pay attention
- Laugh when something funny happens
- Clap if you enjoy something

What kinds of things should you *not* do as an audience member? Examples:

- Talk to your neighbor
- Use a cell phone during the performance
- Yell at the actors (unless they ask you to!)

After the Performance

What did you think of the play?

- If you read “The Nutcracker” beforehand, how was the play similar to the book?
- How was it different?

Describe the performers in the play.

- What did they do to make their characters special (different from the other characters)?
- How did they use their bodies to play their characters (using voice, movement, etc)?
- Did you see anyone else who worked on the play besides the performers on stage?

Describe the characters’ costumes.

- What did each character’s costume tell you about that character?
- Did any of the performers change costumes?
 - If so, why do you think they needed to change costumes?

Describe the set of the play.

- Did it have a lot of locations?
- Did it look like a place you’ve been to before?
- How did different lighting change how the set looked for different scenes?

Did the play have music in it?

- If so, was it only in the background, or did it help tell the story?
- What instruments did you hear in the music?

If you were going to direct *Nutcrackers*, how would your production be different than the play you saw at Magik?

2: Compound Words

A compound word is made of two or more base words put together. For example, **playground** is a compound word:

playground = play + ground

You can often find the meaning of a compound word by using its base words. For example, the word **playground** describes a place (**ground**) and what happens at that place (**play**).

Read each of the following compound words. Draw a line to separate the compound words into its base words, like this:

playground

Then, as a class, discuss what each word means using its base words.

nutcracker	toymaker	lifelike
bedtime	midnight	gingerbread
moonlight	snowflake	grandfather
blueberry	eggnog	fruitcake
goodwill	yuletide	peppermint
frostbite	pancake	sunset

Additional Activity

Teacher: Prompt students to make compound words using the following words as starters.

- any (-time, -day, -one, -body, -thing, -where, -how)
- some (-time, -day, -one, -body, -thing, -where, -how)
- every (-time, -day, -one, -body, -thing, -where)
- tea (-cup, -bag, -spoon, -time, -pot)
- no (-body, -thing, -where)
- night (-time, -mare, -gown, -light)
- day (-time, -dream, -light)
- class (-room, -mate, -time)

3: Write and Illustrate Your Own Story

In *Nutcrackers*, a brave Nutcracker must protect a young girl against the Mouse King. As a class, write a story about a character who protects another character from something or someone.

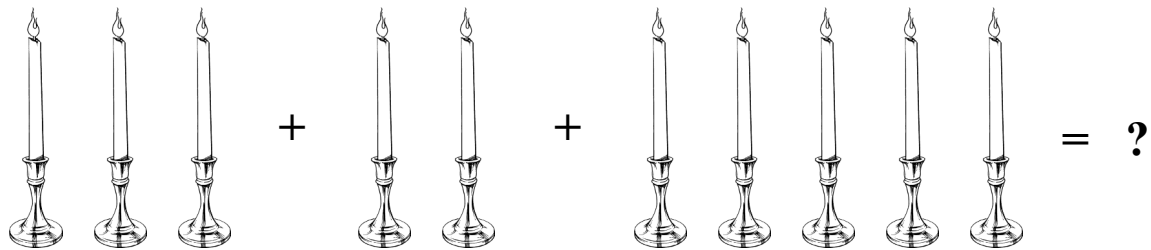
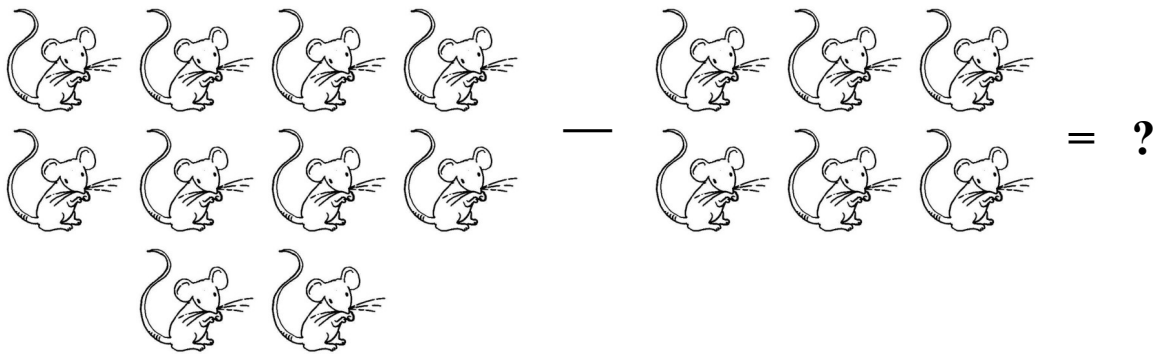
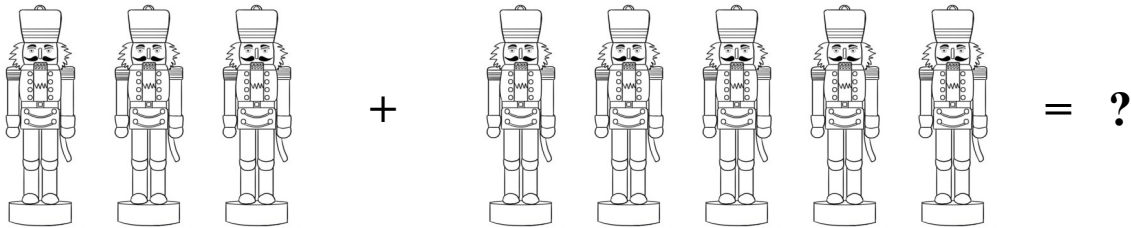
Answer these questions as you write your story:

- Who is your main character (the protector)?
- Who are your other characters?
- What does your main character want?
- What is keeping your main character from what he or she wants?
- How does your main character tackle the problem?
- How does your story end?
- Did your main character learn anything?

In the space below, draw a picture to illustrate your story.



4: Picture Problems



5: Physical Properties

Physical properties are those that you can measure or observe without changing the basic, chemical makeup of an object or substance. For example, the physical properties of a candy cane would include color, weight, and whether the candy cane is transparent or opaque. You can measure all of these properties without changing the chemical makeup of the candy cane.

Examples of physical properties include:

color	weight	mass
volume	transparency/opacity	texture
odor	density	attraction to magnets
freezing point	melting point	boiling point

In *Nutcrackers*, a wooden Nutcracker comes to life. How do you think the following properties of the Nutcracker would change when it becomes a man?

- texture
- weight
- mass
- volume
- odor
- attraction to magnets

Can you think of more physical properties of the Nutcracker that would or would not change?

Gather or identify about 20 different objects in your classroom. These may include:

- pencil
- book
- chalk
- crayon
- magnifier
- paper
- desk
- chair
- calculator
- lunchbox

Observe and/or measure the objects using the properties listed above. Sort your classroom objects by their physical properties.

- Which are smooth in texture? Which are rough?
- Which weigh less than 1 pound? Which weigh more?
- Which can you see light through? Which are opaque?
- Which are attracted to a magnet? Which are not?

6: Holidays in Our Culture

Culture is how we structure our lives and express ourselves. It is made up of our laws and belief systems, as well as our stories, songs, art work, and other creative projects. Holidays are also part of our culture.

What part do holidays play in our culture?

- Name as many holidays as you can think of that play a part in our culture.
- Are some holidays considered more important than others?
 - Why do you think so? How can you tell?
- Why do you think we celebrate holidays?
- What would life be like without holidays?

Think about the holidays you celebrate with your family.

- Which holidays are most important?
 - How can you tell?
- What is your favorite holiday?
 - How do you celebrate it?
 - Do you make special food?
 - Do you dress differently from other days?
 - Do you give or receive gifts?
 - Do you stay home from school?

As a class, discuss the holidays celebrated by Americans in general and your family in particular.

- What holidays do you celebrate in common?
 - Which are different?
- Listening to your classmates, did you learn about a holiday you didn't know about before the discussion?

As a class, choose a culture other than your own. Research how people of that culture celebrate holidays.

- Do holidays play a part in that culture?
- Which holidays are considered most important?
- Does that culture celebrate any of the same holidays your culture celebrates?
 - If so, does it celebrate those holidays in the same way or differently?
- Based on the holidays celebrated, which cultures would you most like to live in? Why?

7: Draw What You Saw!

Choose your favorite moment from *Nutcrackers*. Use the space below to draw a picture of that moment. Use your own colors and style to show that scene however you want to. When you finish, share your picture with your class. Be ready to answer questions about your picture, such as:

- Who does your picture show?
- What is happening in your picture?
- Why did you choose the colors you used?
- How did you show emotions (feelings) in your picture?
- What happened just before the moment you drew? What will happen just afterward?
- Did anyone else draw the same moment you drew?
 - How is their picture similar?
 - How is it different?



8: Exploring Music

Play for your students a recording of *The Nutcracker*, by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

Tchaikovsky wrote this piece as a ballet. Encourage children to add dance/movement to their listening experience. Make sure students have room to move around. Point out different tempos and rhythms to encourage change in dance/movement. Help students find the beat of a piece by clapping, marching in place, snapping your fingers, etc. Talk about the similarities and differences between the musical sections (e.g.: *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy* vs. *Russian Dance*).

Using a variety of musical instruments or everyday objects, lead students through a discussion of musical qualities:

- Demonstrate musical qualities
 - loud vs. soft sounds
 - high-pitched notes vs. low-pitched notes
 - fast rhythms vs. slow rhythms
- Ask students to emulate your examples using instruments, their voices, or their bodies (e.g., clapping their hands, snapping their fingers, clicking their tongues)
- Ask students to sort instruments
 - sort single-pitch instruments from low-pitched to high-pitched
 - sort single-pitch instruments separately from multi-pitch instruments
- Create a simple rhythmic pattern
 - ask students to repeat it
 - ask students to create and repeat their own simple rhythmic patterns
- Create a simple melody
 - ask students to repeat it
 - ask students to create and play their own simple melodies
- As a class, create a composition with a mood (e.g.: happy, sad, sneaky, playful)

If your school has a music teacher, he or she can help you gather a variety of simple instruments to use. Alternatively, you may invite a group of middle, high school, or college band students to demonstrate their instruments for your students. Everyday objects you could use include:

- cardboard oatmeal can (with lid)
- rubber band
- chopsticks
- metal spoons
- plastic bucket
- plastic storage bin
- pots and pans
- pot/pan lids
- wooden spoon
- plastic cup with lid, filled $\frac{1}{4}$ full with dry beans or rice
- cardboard tubes
- glasses with different levels of water

TEXAS

Kindergarten

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	Fine Arts 117.4.b.5
2	ELA 110.11.b.5
3	ELA 110.11.b.13-14
4	Math 111.12.b.1, 3-4
5	Science 112.11.b.2, 5
6	Soc Studies 113.11.b.12
7	Fine Arts 117.2.b.1-2, 4
8	Fine Arts 117.3.b.1-2, 4

Grade 1

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	Fine Arts 117.7.b.5
2	ELA 110.12.b.6
3	ELA 110.12.b.17-18
4	Math 111.13.b.1-3
5	Science 112.12.b.2, 5
6	Soc Studies 113.12.b.15
7	Fine Arts 117.5.b.1-2, 4
8	Fine Arts 117.6.b.1-2, 4

COMMON CORE

Kindergarten

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA L.K.4, 6
3	ELA W.K.3
4	Math K.OA.1-2

Grade 1

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA L.1.4, 6
3	ELA W.1.3
4	Math 1.OA.1-2, 5, 7-8