



WWI Performance Pack: Dance Resources

3. Over the top!

Richard Lloyd King: Hello – it's Richard here with the last of three *Dance Workshops* marking the one hundred year anniversary of the start of World War One.

Today's sequences are inspired by the experiences of soldiers on the frontline, the morale-boosting effect of America joining the War and, most importantly, the Armistice on the 11th of November 1918, when World War One ended.

But first, check you're standing in a space...ready to warm-up with some popular American ragtime!

Ragtime reflected the upbeat energy and optimism of America. So, get ready to walk round the room with light, confident steps. Lift your knees high and step lightly onto the balls of your feet as you walk, and pose, to the ragtime beat. Listen carefully everyone and follow me! Here we go!

It's step 2, 3. Pose!

Step 2, 3. Pose!

Step 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Pose!

And again! Step 2, 3. Pose!

Step 2, 3. Pose!

Step 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Pose!



Keep going!

And stop! We'll be coming back to those ragtime rhythms later – but for now, divide the class into three roughly equal lines, standing one line behind the other, along one side of the room. Pause now to get that organized.

The line at the front is line 1, the line in the middle is line 2, and the line at the back is line 3. Stay in your lines but sit down a minute, just where you are and listen.

Standing side by side, soldiers left the relative safety of the trenches, to walk across no-man's-land towards the enemy.

The contrasting feelings of fear and bravery were always there – but, throughout it all, soldiers found ways to help and encourage one another.

When you hear that music and music again, you're going to stand up and move forward, one line at a time – like soldiers leaving the trenches to walk across no-man's-land. Walk slowly forwards with sometimes brave, sometimes fearful steps and when you reach the opposite side of the room freeze in a strong battle pose.

OK – Line 1 – you're moving first! Everyone else, stay sitting down and keep really still until it's your turn to move.

Line 1 – stand up with the whistle!

And step...step...step...step...keep going!

Brave or fearful?

Now freeze in a strong battle pose!



Line 2 – stand up!

It's step...step...step...step...step...keep going!

Freeze in a battle pose behind line 1.

Line 3 – stand up!

Walk slowly forwards...

And freeze in your battle pose behind line 2.

And relax. Everyone turn round 180 degrees to face the opposite side of the room...and sit down.

We're going to try that 'no-man's-land' sequence again but, this time, really focus on the quality of your steps to show when you're feeling brave or fearful. You could even add a few nervous sideways glances or an encouraging thumbs-up to someone nearby.

OK – new line 1 – stand up with the whistle!

And step...step...step...step...keeping going...with sometimes brave and sometimes fearful steps.

Freeze in your strong battle pose!

Line 2 - stand up!

Walk slowly forwards...

Strong battle pose!

New line 3 – stand up!



Walk forwards...

And battle pose!

Hold it! And everyone relax!

If you want to practice and perfect that 'no-man's-land' sequence, replay the music now.

Quickly find a partner, move to a space, and sit down together. Take a pause and do that now.

In 1917 America joined the War against Germany. The arrival of fresh American troops on the battlefields of France was a great morale-booster for the war-weary soldiers of the Allied armies. This morale-boosting influence was felt back on the home-front too – with a craze for humorous American ragtime dances - like the 'Grizzly Bear'!

Stand up facing your partner. Curl your fingers and spread them out wide – like the long, sharp claws of a grizzly bear! Lift your grizzly bear claws out in front of you to show them off! And relax them back down by your sides!

When you hear the music, walk round in a small circle with your partner - using those light, ball-of-the-foot steps you practiced in the warm-up. But listen out, because each time I say 'claws!' – I want you to show off your long, sharp claws, and make a roaring Grizzly Bear face! Ready partners? Wait for the introduction at the start of the music, then, follow me!

Here we go!

It's step, 2, 3. Claws!



Step, 2, 3. Claws!

Step, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Claws!

Hold it! For the next part of the dance you take turns with your partner to lean back with your hands in the air and a terrified expression on your face! It's as if you've just seen an enormous and extremely frightening bear! OK - quickly decide who's going first partners! Let's try that with the music!

First person – look terrified!

Second person – look terrified!

Then, you circle round together again, before showing off your sharp claws and grizzly bear roar to finish! Try that now partners!

And step, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Claws!

OK - let's put all those moves together to show off the complete Grizzly Bear dance! This time, keep looking at your partner as you circle round together and really exaggerate those grizzly bear actions for maximum comic effect! Ready everyone?

Wait for it!

And step, 2, 3. Claws!

Step, 2, 3. Claws!

Step, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Claws!

First person – look terrified!



Second person – look terrified!

And step, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Claws!

Get ready to try that Grizzly Bear dance again partners – but this time, you're on your own! So listen carefully to the music, and really show off! Go!

Hold that Grizzly Bear pose! And relax.

If there's time, divide the class into two performance groups and take turns to show off that funny ragtime dance again. You'll need to replay the music.

Join two other pairs nearby to make a group of six, then, sit down together in a space. Pause now to get that organized.

On the 11th of November, 1918 Germany signed an armistice with the Allies – after four terrible years of death and destruction World War One was over. More than 9 million soldiers had died. They were buried together in rows and rows of identical war-graves, filling military cemeteries across France and Europe. Every year, on the 11th of November we remember the sacrifice made by the soldiers of World War One and of other conflicts since.

Stand up, and get into a follow-the-leader line with the rest of your group. When you hear that music again, walk slowly forward in your group line and spread out across the width of the room. The idea is to end up with all the group lines standing parallel and equally spaced throughout the room – like the rows of war-graves in the cemeteries of World War One.

Get ready to try that now.



Stand up straight and tall!

It's...step...step...step...step...keep going...

Your group line should be spread out across the width of the room, equally spaced and parallel to the other group lines. When you hear the bugle, slowly raise your arms to make the shape of a cross, or solemnly bow your head.

And relax your arms back down.

To end the dance, each group is going to form the shape of a war memorial. Two people stand back to back to form the memorial stone or cross, while the remaining four people face in towards them, holding one another's outstretched hands to form a square-shaped chain surround. Take a pause to decide who's doing what with the rest of your group and practice moving smoothly into that war memorial shape without the music first.

Time to try it *with* the music now! So get back into you're your group lines – spread evenly across the width the room. Smoothly and calmly, move into your group war memorial shape.

The four people forming the chain surround – bow your head... and slowly kneel down...hold your final position! And relax.

Let's put both parts of that sequence together. Remember, you start in your follow-the-leader group lines – walking slowly forward to spread out across the width of the room, like evenly spaced war-graves. When you hear the bugle, you raise your arms to make the shape of a cross, or solemnly bow your head.



And finally, when the music changes, you move smoothly into your group war memorial shape.

OK - get ready in your follow-the-leader lines...

Stand up straight...

And step...step...step...step...keep going...

Raise your arms to make a cross, or solemnly bow your head.

Smoothly move into your war memorial shape...

Bow your head...and slowly kneel down.

Hold your final position! And relax.

That's it for today – but don't forget, all the dance sequences feature in our special commemorative play called 'Archie Dobson's War' – which you can find online at the School Radio Website.

For now, sit down where you are and relax.

Take a few deep, gentle breaths as you slowly lift up from the waist...and stretch your arms up above your head...hold it! And relax your arms back down...

Close your eyes...and remember the soldiers of World War One. Goodbye.

