

DANSA
EN BOK

MANUAL



BACKGROUND

The idea for the Dance a Book method came up in conversation between us when we were working as dance and library consultants, respectively, at Kultur och bildning (Culture and Education), Region Uppsala. We wanted to devise a method in which dance and music would stimulate reading and language learning, as well as personal creativity.

Dance a Book can be used by primary and preschool teachers, library staff, dance teachers and others who want to try combining reading and dancing. The method uses free creativity on the basis of a picture book selected by the teacher or the group of children and the teacher together.

Choreographer Sophia Färlin-Månsson wrote the manual and musician Peter Lagergren composed the original music to go with it.

The material for Dance a Book is available to download from our website and may be used freely provided that Länsbibliotek Uppsala and Kulturenheten at Region Uppsala are acknowledged as originators.

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TEXT: Sophia Färlin-Månsson **TRANSLATOR:** Tomas Tranæus / Space 360 **MUSIC:** Peter Lagergren

PHOTOGRAPHY: Elin Selin **PRINT PRODUCTION:** Byrå4

The book and music can be downloaded from www.regionuppsala.se/dansaenbok
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INTRODUCTION

Choose a book. It can be a book that both you and the children know or an entirely new book you want to introduce. Follow your own sense of what seems best for the particular group of children you're working with. It's important that you yourself feel inspired by the book when you begin.

Listen to the music while you're planning your reading and dancing session. There are seven songs, and each one is about 10 minutes long. What songs to use and for how long you're going to use the music is for you to decide. Sometimes just a minute may be enough, while other times you may want to use the whole piece.

You can use props if you want to. Use anything you like that feels inspiring or that emphasises something in the book.

There is no right or wrong way to dance. You can interpret the text and pictures any way you like. Let your creativity flow!



GETTING STARTED

You need a room you can dance in. Prepare the room so you have a free space. Add any props you want to use.

Assemble the group outside the room. Line up and put your hands on the shoulder of the person in front of you, then dance into the room like a train with carriages. Use the first song, Intro, when you dance into the room. As the adult, you can take the lead to begin with. When you feel ready, everyone sits down in a circle on the floor and you turn off the music.

READING

Sit in a circle and begin by reading a few sentences, a page or a longer section of the book. Talk to the children about what you've read and what you've seen in the pictures. Then choose together what you want to dance from the story.



START DANCING

CHOOSE A SONG

Then let the children try moving like something from the book's pictures, such as whirling like the wind, rolling like heavy logs or rumbling like thunder. It's a good idea for everyone to dance the same thing to begin with. The children will probably have many suggestions for what you can continue dancing as.

When you feel that you've finished this step, turn off the music and get everyone to sit on the floor again. Then read the next section in the book.

FOLLOW THIS ORDER AND REPEAT THE STEPS:

- Read from the book
- Talk about what you've read
- Turn on the music
- Dance
- Turn off the music
- Sit down on the floor

FINISHING

End the dancing session the same way you began it, by dancing out of the room in a long line. That way you get a clear beginning and end to a nice dancing story. Use the first song, Intro, again.



THE MUSIC

The music is instrumental and each song is about 10 minutes long.

1. **INTRO** – Melodic accordion piece with a steady beat.
2. **SUGGESTIVO** – Calmer piece, drums.
3. **BERIMBAO** – Oriental-style song played on a berimbau, a single-string percussion instrument.
4. **KALIMBA** – A ringing dream played on a kalimba.
5. **MELANKOLIO** – Melancholic, Balkan-inspired song played on an accordion and a harmonica.
6. **ÖSET** – Fast tempo with a lot of drums.
7. **HARMONIUM** – A lone flute in a synthesizer soundscape.



PROPS

CLOTH AND RIBBONS

A blue cloth can become a river to run under or jump across. The cloth can be made to billow and swell like waves, or be a stream and a waterfall.

A long ribbon can take on a life of its own and start moving. The ribbon can become a dragon's tail, or a fence that can't be climbed.

INDOORS AND OUT

Toy animals, balls, cushions and much else can be used as props in the dance. If you're outdoors, use stones, branches, tree stumps, leaves – let your imagination guide you.

Use the objects in the way that suits you best – to jump over, crawl under, slither alongside, throw to each other and so on!

HOW CAN YOU BE INSPIRED TO DANCE BEYOND WHAT YOU SEE IN THE PICTURES AND READ IN THE TEXT?

WATER

If there's water in the story, what does it look like? Is it a brook or an ocean? Raindrops perhaps, or a puddle? Dive into the water and swim around. Can you move fast in the water? Or is it like moving in slow motion? How do you move as if in slow motion? Try by first moving only your fingers very slowly, then your hand, your arm, your shoulder and then the rest of you until your entire body is moving in slow motion.

The feeling of water can be many different things: cold, soft, warm. What do you think the water in the story feels like?

What's under the water's surface? Crabs maybe, or herring, pike, tadpoles, seaweed, coral? Build on the water theme and let your imagination flow freely.

ANIMALS

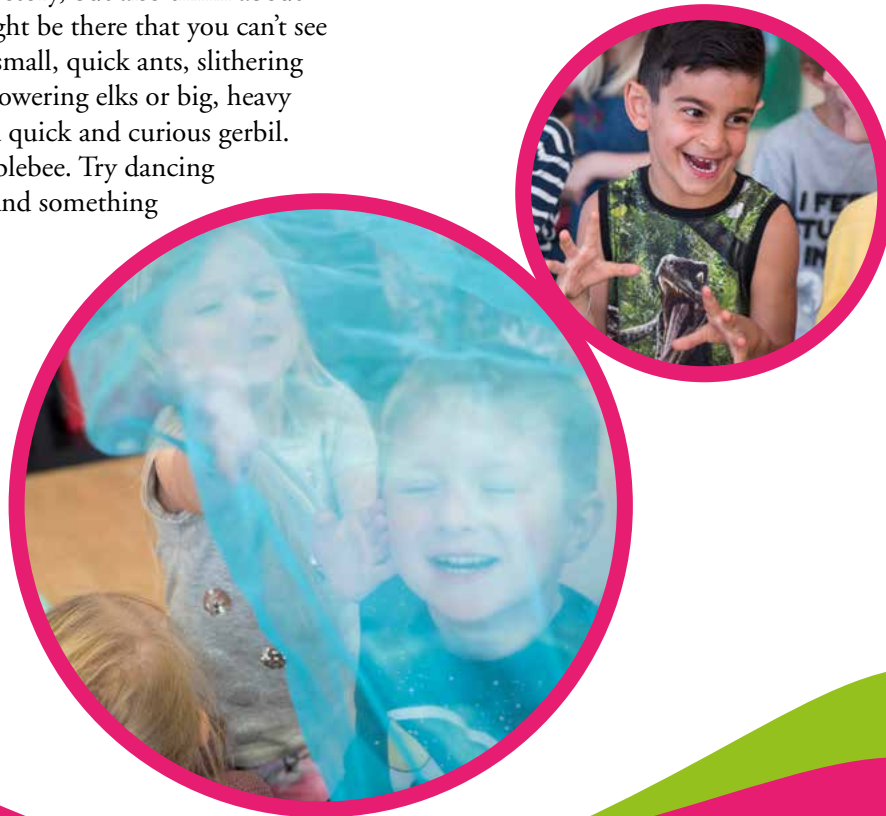
Dance the animals in a story, but also think about what other animals might be there that you can't see in the picture, such as small, quick ants, slithering snakes, gooey worms, towering elks or big, heavy dinosaurs. Dance like a quick and curious gerbil. Or like a buzzing bumblebee. Try dancing something that's light and something that's heavy.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Molecules, planets, lorries, tractors, robots, rockets – pick up on various elements of the story and let yourself be inspired by the book.

FEELINGS

Dance different feelings in the story – maybe there's someone in it who's shy, curious, scared, sad, happy, lonely, tired, hopeful, angry or lively. Let the children try dancing a feeling. Pay attention to whether any child is strongly affected by the feeling. You may have to finish off the feelings dance and move on to another part of the story.



FURTHER THEMES IF YOU WANT TO

QUALITIES, TEMPOS, LEVELS

Qualities: hard as metal machines, staccato like a robot, light as a feather or soft as a cloud. Tempos: accelerating like “the rocket”, super fast like a racing car, slow as a tortoise or a snail. You can also do movements in slow motion, as when you move in water or in space. Levels in the room – high, low or in between (high like the clouds, in between like a dog, low like a snake).

DANCING LETTERS

Dancing letters can be done in many different ways. Lying down, standing up, sitting, in twos or in groups. For example, use your whole body to make the shape of a letter. Add several letters to each other, make a word, and repeat the movements. The letter dance can be endlessly varied and developed.



SUGGESTIONS

- For how long should we be doing it? Between 30 and 40 minutes is usually enough.
- We recommend that the group not be bigger than 12 to 15 children.
- It's important to talk about what you have read, so that the children can think about and get an understanding of the content of the book. The text may create associations with something else, in which case you can dance that too. The important thing is for the children's creativity to flow freely and for their own creativity to be at the heart of the activity.
- It's fine to change songs in the middle of the dancing session if you want to. See the music as a help and an inspiration to dancing.
- Some children may be a little wary and not want to join in. Whoever doesn't want to dance can be allowed to sit and watch, but usually the child will be drawn into the dance eventually. If you dance a book several times it may be easier to get everyone involved.
- If things get too wild or the children begin to drift: turn off the music, sit down on the floor again and turn the page in the book. Often that will be enough to capture the children's interest again.
- Finish off with a reflection on having danced a book – what you've done, how it was, how it felt, what did we dance, what did we read, was anything especially fun, was anything hard? These discussions are important for reading and language comprehension.



Kultur och bildning

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