

Nutcracker

COSTUME CHALLENGE



OVERVIEW

The goal of this challenge is to create a costume for one of The Nutcracker Ballet characters/dancers in the time given.

DO

1. Look at videos, books, or images of The Nutcracker Ballet characters. Here is a video of the 2019 Nutcracker Ballet at Stephens Auditorium: <https://youtu.be/HlIK6wlDODc>
2. Review elements of The Nutcracker ballet such as the story, characters, and the setting. Create a list of potential characters for reference.
3. Break youth into groups of two or four.
4. Have teams pick a character from the story and begin to brainstorming costume ideas. Encourage teams to be creative and to listen to each other's ideas.
5. Have teams sketch out a costume design. Here are the design criteria: (1) it must be something that can be danced in, and (2) it can only use the materials provided.
6. Have teams pick one youth to be the costume model. Then, set a timer for the allotted minutes (20-30 minutes suggested) and have each group create their costume.
7. Encourage teams to present their costumes to the larger group. Have them describe their costume and how the costume reflects the character to the group. For fun, play the Nutcracker Ballet music (Tchaikovsky - Nutcracker Suite Op. 71a) and have students dance in their costumes to make sure they meet criteria #2!
8. Take a photo or a video of the costumes and send a copy to iowa4hmail@iastate.edu.

REFLECT/APPLY

1. Encourage youth to think about the steps they took to create their costumes.
 - a. What steps did the team take to design the costume?
 - b. Did the team use any math, science, or technology? Examples might include measuring, creating certain shapes or looking up a costume idea online.
 - c. How did the materials provided, impact the design choices?
 - d. How did you all work as a team?

GRADES

2-8

MATERIALS

One costume materials bag for each team of youth. Suggested materials might include: one black garbage bag, duct tape, tape measure, and embellishment items such as fabric pieces, ribbon, string, tulle, or stickers.

CAREER CONNECTIONS

If youth enjoyed this experience, encourage them to consider being a costume designer or a materials engineer. There are many great careers that combine the arts + STEM.

Costume Designer: A person in charge of designing the clothing elements worn by performers in a film or stage production.

Materials Engineer: Materials engineers create new materials and improve existing materials.



Photo by Bill Barry



2. Talk about how what was learned connects to other activities in their lives.
 - a. What are some ways our clothing can tell others something good about ourselves?
 - b. What would have made these materials easier to use? What materials could have been added?
 - c. Do you think a dancer would enjoy dancing in the costume? If not, what changes could be made?
 - d. What STEAM Careers are available in the theater?



LEARNING EXTENSIONS

- Would you like to learn more about costuming? You can learn about clothing in 4-H! Check out the high school showcase event held annually at the Iowa State Fair, the Iowa 4-H Awardrobe Clothing Event. <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/awardrobe-clothing-event>
- Check out the ISU Fashion Show. <https://aeshm.hs.iastate.edu/current-students/community/fashion-show/>
- To learn more about material engineering go to: <https://www.mse.iastate.edu/>
- Use your costumes as part of a reader's theater performance.



Photos by Bill Barry

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