

THE CANTERVILLE GHOST



**London Children's Ballet
2018
Education Pack**



LONDON CHILDREN'S BALLET

Dear Teacher,

We are delighted your school is able to come to the London Children's Ballet schools' outreach matinée performance of *The Canterville Ghost* on **Friday 20 April at noon** at the Peacock Theatre.

We have prepared this Educational Pack to help you prepare the children in your class for their trip to see *The Canterville Ghost*. We have found children appreciate the ballet so much more if they know what to expect, understand the story and the idea of telling stories without words, and know a bit about the characters and dancers involved. It may even be helpful to make copies of the scenario for the children to bring to the theatre.

There are **two key things** that we would be so grateful if you could do:

- 1) After the ballet, ask the children in your class to write letters to us describing their visit to the ballet. We use these letters each year to help raise money for your sponsored tickets, and it is important for us to be able to show the charity's donors how much these trips to the theatre mean to the children involved.**
- 2) We have also included a feedback form for each class teacher to complete and return to us after the show. I know you are incredibly busy, but completing this form is a compulsory for all schools attending as these statistics are required of us by our funders. In addition, your comments help us to improve our work and give you a better experience.**

Please send letters from the children and feedback forms to: Lara Waterfield, London Children's Ballet, 73 St Charles Square, London W10 6EJ

Tickets will be sent to you in April and we look forward to seeing you at the theatre.

With many thanks,

Lucille Briance

Founder and Artistic Director

Education Pack Activity Key



WRITING	THINKING/ DISCUSION	ART/DRAWING	MOVEMENT	PUZZLE/ GAME	LISTENING/ MUSIC	ACTING
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The Scenario of THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

Act 1

Sir Simon Canterville has haunted his ancestral home since 1584, cursed to be stuck there forever unless he can convince 'a golden girl' to pray for him. He would then be set free to go to heaven. But the ghost is too scary to make friends, and so he gives up and instead enjoys frightening generations of the Canterville family. He scares off the last member of the Canterville family to live in the house, Lady Canterville. The American Otis family buy the house and move in. The naughty twins enjoy teasing the household staff, the son - Washington - flirts with the maids, and the eldest daughter - Virginia - charms the house. As it turns out, the American family are completely not scared by the ghost, in fact, the twins find out they love to tease and torment him as much as anyone else!

The family throw a big housewarming party where they show off their energetic American dance moves. Cecil, the young Duke of Cheshire, comes to the party and spots Virginia, immediately falling in love with her.

Act 2

Virginia paints Cecil's portrait and it is clear to the whole family that they have fallen in love with one another. The ghost is left sad because he is unable to scare the family and is instead made to look like a fool by the twins. Virginia finds the ghost upset in the library and he explains the curse to her. He begs her to help him fulfil the prophecy so that he can be freed. She agrees and gets past ghosts and goblins who try to stop her following the ghost into the other world.

Meanwhile, the Otis family have invited their neighbours to swim and play tennis. They realise that Virginia is missing and Cecil and Mr Otis lead a search party to find her. As the clock chimes 1am, Virginia appears at the top of the stairs, pale as a ghost. She won't explain to the family but asks them to follow her. She leads them to the hidden basement room where they see the skeleton of Sir Simon Canterville. She shows them a scroll that explains the curse.

In the final scene of the ballet, Cecil and Virginia have just been married. They run out of church from their wedding to join their guests in celebration. Cecil leads Virginia away from the crowd to ask her about the night that she went missing. Virginia keeps the secret of that night and, in the background, the Ghost fades away, free at last.

'The Canterville Ghost' characters

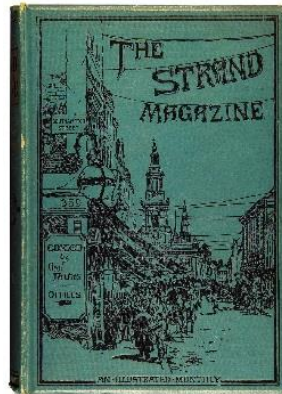
- **Sir Simon Canterville (or 'the Canterville Ghost')** – The ghost of the Sir Simon Canterville who has been cursed to haunt the house until he can befriend someone and be set free.
- **Mr and Mrs Otis** – the mother and father of the Otis family, who have moved to England from America. They are not scared of the ghost.
- **Washington Otis** – the son of the Otis family.
- **Virginia Otis** – the eldest daughter of the Otis family.
- **The twins** – the youngest members of the Otis family. They are particularly not scared by the ghost and love finding ways to trick and tease him.
- **Cecil** – the Duke of Cheshire. He falls in love with Virginia and leads the search party to find her when she goes missing.
- **Mrs Umney** – the housekeeper at Canterville Chase.
- **The Butler** – a member of the house staff. He is in love with Mrs Umney.



Context

People in the Victorian era loved ghost stories! Lots of writers wrote about ghosts in their books and they would tell each other these ghost stories around the fire. At this time, stories would often be printed in magazines in small chunks, so in each edition of the magazine you would get the next part of the story. It would be like watching your favourite TV show every week. Ghost stories were perfect for this style of storytelling because they would include lots of moments of suspense or cliffhangers, when the reader wouldn't know what was going to happen next, and they would have to return to the magazine the following week to find out what happened.

However, like Sir Simon Canterville in *The Canterville Ghost*, the ghosts weren't all terrible, horrible creatures. There were ghosts that actually made the human characters better people. Charles Dickens, another famous Victorian writer, wrote a novel called 'A Christmas Carol' where a grumpy mean old man called Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by three ghosts who make him realise that he needs to be a kinder man in order to be happy by showing him what Christmas for him used to be like, what it is now and what it will be in the future if he carries on as he is. He makes up for his bad behaviour just in time for Christmas.



ACTIVITY BOX



Choose two of the following things which writers often include in ghost stories and try to write a paragraph where you set a spooky scene using them:

- Dark and stormy weather
- Slamming doors/moving objects
- A dark country path
- Someone who is lost
- Candles being blown out/the room going dark
- An abandoned house
- Cobwebs

Halfway through your piece introduce one of the funny elements from the list below. This should make your piece change from being scary to being humorous.

- Someone standing up to the ghost/refusing to be scared
- The ghost doing something unexpected/funny
- A prank - the ghost's tricks causing a misunderstanding
- A silly outfit
- Or anything else you can think of!

OSCAR WILDE: Witticisms



The Canterville Ghost is a short story written by Oscar Wilde in 1887. It combines Wilde's wit and humour with suspense, drama and horror.

Oscar Wilde was born on October 16, 1854 in Dublin. Wilde was a popular literary figure in late Victorian England, writing novels, poetry and plays. He is particularly known for his brilliant wit, flamboyant style and infamous imprisonment for homosexuality. After he was released, he left England and never came back, remaining in exile until his death on November 30, 1900 at the age of 46.

He wrote many plays, particularly comedies. The last and most popular of his comedies was *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a farce and melodrama full of confusion and deception. As well as being amusing, these plays and his short stories were also critical of the times in which they were written. Wilde also wrote children's books, the most well-known being *The Happy Prince*. This story was chosen for the first ever London Children's Ballet's production in 1994.

In 1891 he published his first and only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The novel is a cautionary tale about a young man, Dorian Gray, who is granted a wish that a portrait of him will age while he remains youthful and lives a life of sin and pleasure. However, all his worst deeds are symbolised on the painting meaning he can never forget them.

Wilde is well-known for his witty sense of humour. Wilde dabbled in everything from plays and poetry to essays and fiction. Whatever the medium, his wit shone through. His short, clever, humorous statements are known as **witticisms**. Here are some examples:

- "I can resist everything except temptation"
- "There is only one thing in the world that is worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about."
- "A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing."

ACTIVITY BOX



With a partner, try to figure out what Wilde is trying to say in the above 'witticisms'.

Extended task: Try and write your own witticisms.

Personal Development

The ghost is eventually freed by the eldest Otis daughter, Virginia, because he repents and she forgives him. This means that he admits he has done something very wrong and looks for forgiveness, which she grants.

Forgiveness is when we tell someone that we accept the mistakes they have made and we no longer feel angry at them for doing the bad thing they did. In order to forgive someone, you have to be a sympathetic person – this means that you understand what they are going through and you feel pity or sadness for them.



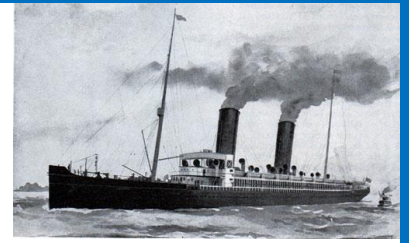
ACTIVITY BOX



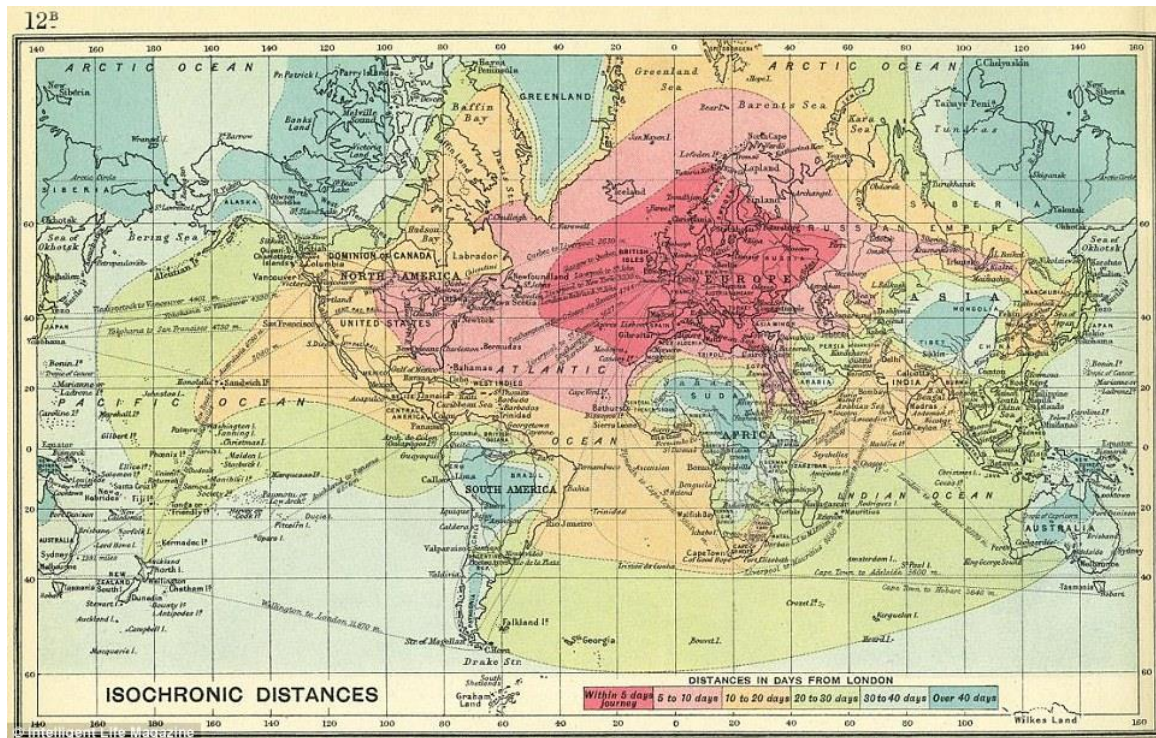
- We would describe Virginia as 'sympathetic'. What describing words (adjectives) would you use about these other characters in the ballet?
 - Cecil
 - The twins
 - Mrs Otis
 - The ghost
- What do you think the best way of trying to ask for forgiveness is?
- Can you understand why the ghost is so unhappy and behaves like he does? Write a letter from Virginia to Cecil explaining why she helped him.
- Discuss as a class times when you have forgiven someone. Then discuss times when you have had to ask for forgiveness.

Travel in the Victorian age

In Oscar Wilde's story, the Otis family had travelled from America to England to live. When you travel to a new country to live, it is called immigration.



At the time that Oscar Wilde wrote the story there would have been no planes, so the family would have had to travel from America to England in a big boat called a steamship. This was a huge journey across one of the biggest oceans in the world, the Atlantic, and it would have taken around 7 – 10 days depending on how bad the weather was. If it was very stormy, it could take up to 20 days! In the map below, the light pink area shows places that were about 7-10 days apart.



The book is set around the time of the Industrial Revolution. This was a time when people made lots of new machines to make life easier. Transport got a lot faster because of this. The time that it took people to travel between the countries became much shorter, and because of this, a lot more families made the journey between England and America. Boats could also carry more people. The largest had up to 1,900 passengers onboard.

Life onboard a steamship could be very exciting. There would be games on deck like tug-of-war and badminton matches, probably perfect activities for the two naughty Otis twins! Often people onboard the boat wanted to show that they were very rich by wearing beautiful outfits and eating extravagant meals which were served in many courses.

ACTIVITY BOX



Think about what it would have been like to be a child about your age travelling from America to England at this time and write a diary entry for one day on board a steamship as one of the twins.



STORYBOARD



Draw your own pictures of the story

1) The Grim Reaper tells Sir Canterville's ghost that he is cursed until the prophecy is fulfilled

2) The Otis family arrive from America

3) The ghost is teased and tormented by the twins

4) The housewarming party – Cecil and Virginia meet

5) The ghost begs Virginia to help him break the curse

6) Virginia refuses to be scared away by the ghosts and goblins

7) Sir Simon Canterville's burial

8) Cecil and Virginia's wedding

Meet the Cast



Rahul Amin-Sanchez – Hello! My name is Rahul and I'm 11 years old. I started dancing, mainly tap dancing, from a very young age but only took up ballet 3 years ago. I loved it straightaway and it's a huge part of me now. I like ballet because you can express yourself through dance and meet lots of new people. My character in 'The Canterville Ghost' is the Butler. He is a neat, obedient man but he is in love with Mrs Umney which can make him flirty at times!



Amelia Davison – I'm nearly 13 and my main hobby is dancing but I also enjoy writing and acting. I like how ballet allows you to express yourself without words and also the elegant graceful moves. I love being a part of LCB because you get to take part in a very professional production and you are an important member of the company, no matter what role you're playing. I never thought I would stand a chance of getting into the company through the auditions but it just goes to show that if you don't try, you'll never know!



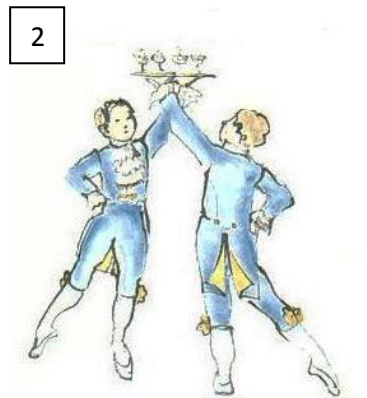
Zack Tidswell – Hi I'm Zack and I'm 16 years old. My favourite parts of the week are going to my dance class and rehearsing for LCB. I play the ghost of Sir Simon Canterville. I like the cheeky, naughty side of the ghost's personality and think that reflects me when I was younger. I used to constantly try to find ways to scare my brother! I like that you shouldn't necessarily like the ghost because of his bad deeds but you end up sympathising with him. I also relate to the ghost because he can struggle to express himself. Sometimes I find it hard to express myself through words and ballet allows me to do what I sometimes can't do when I speak or write. Dance is an amazing thing – it helps you focus and express yourself. Everyone should try it!

Costumes of the Ballet



Costumes are a very important part of any performance. A costume helps you get into character and helps the audience recognize who you are meant to be. The **costume designer** draws the costumes and it is important to make sure that the designs don't restrict the dancer's body so they can move freely. When the designs are finished, the **costume makers** find the fabric and make the costumes according to the design.

Can you guess the characters from these *The Canterville Ghost* design sketches? We have added a list of options below to help!



Mrs Umney	Virginia	Goblins	The Ghost
Footmen	The naughty twins	The Butler	Rook

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Fit for stage

Whilst the story of *The Canterville Ghost* is actually set in the Victorian times, the LCB ballet production is based in 1920s to allow the dancers to wear more colourful and free costumes. You may notice, with help from the pictures below, that Victorian clothing is often heavy, dark, and covers most of the body. It would be pretty hard to dance in! In the 1920s style outfits, the dancers don't have to have their legs and arms covered by many layers, allowing them to move more freely.

Examples of Victorian clothes



Examples of 1920s clothes



ACTIVITY BOX

Choose your favourite character from *The Canterville Ghost* and design a costume for them. You can create a costume for whatever period you would like your version of 'The Canterville Ghost' to be set in. Here are some things to think about:

- What sort of material will allow the dancer to move freely?
- What sort of clothes were typical of your chosen period?
- How are these different to the clothes that you wear today?

When designing a costume it is important to remember:

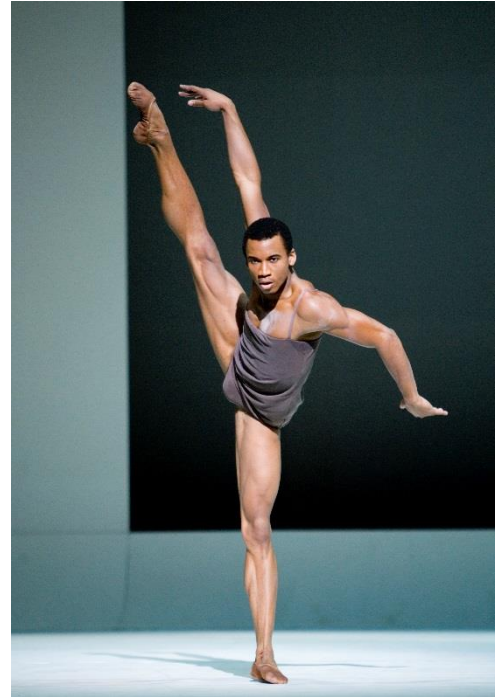
- Who the costume is for? Think about your character's personality.
- What colours you want to use and why
- What sort of material you want to use and why

Label your design with these details.

Ballet Dancing: Strength and Flexibility

Dancers need to be both strong and flexible.

Dancers need to have incredibly **strong muscles** to control their limbs (arms and legs) when they are dancing. Even standing with good balletic posture requires lots of strength. Feet have to be strong to help a dancer take off from the floor when they are jumping, core (stomach) muscles need to be strong to help with balance and turning, and leg muscles need to be long and lean but capable of holding positions that most people can't hold. Female dancers need particularly strong feet and ankles to help them dance on the tips of their toes. Male dancers need to do additional weight training to help them gain strength for partner work (when they lift up the female dancers).



Flexibility is having a body that moves freely and easily. Dancers need flexible legs and backs to help them dance beautifully. Audiences are really impressed when they see high legs or split jumps!



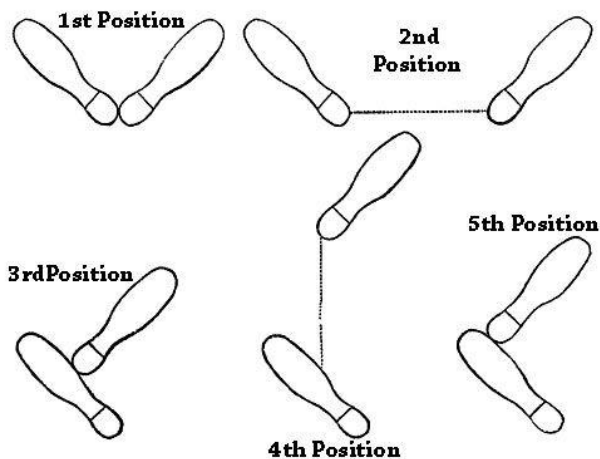
Interesting Facts

- Football players and boxers often take ballet classes as part of their training. It helps them to gain better balance and speeds up their footwork. Rio Ferdinand trained at the Central School of Ballet between the ages of 11 and 13
- Female dancers have to dance on the tips of their toes, this is called dancing “sur la pointe”.
- A professional male ballet dancer can leap up to five feet off the floor!

ACTIVITY BOX !!

How long can you stand on one leg without wobbling? Practise standing still on one leg and once you think you have mastered that, then see if you can balance up on the balls of your feet for one minute with your heel as high off the floor as you can get it.

Ballet Dancing: Movement and Grace



The five positions of the feet are usually one of the first things taught in a ballet class. They are essential to the technique of classical ballet as practically every step begins and ends in one of the five basic positions. **!!**

Practise the five positions of the feet in class.

Corps de Ballet

Corps de Ballet is a term that refers to dancers dancing in a group. While soloists will normally be dancing a specific named character, such as 'Romeo', 'Aurora' or 'Clara', a Corps de Ballet dancer does not usually have a name for their character. Instead, they work as one big unit.

A good corps de ballet must work as team and try to appear like they are moving as one. They tend to do the same choreography in unison and sometimes making complicated patterns at the same time.

Timing is especially important for every member of the corps de ballet and they must be focused. It is much easier to spot one corps member out of twenty standing out of place or being a count late than a principal changing a dance step as the mistake is simply more noticeable.



ACTIVITY BOX

!!
In small groups create a short phrase of movements and positions. Try to perform them at exactly the same time. This will require a lot of concentration and team work.

Simple phrases will look more effective.

Try to include:

- A jump
- A freeze/frame position (here are some examples)
- Graceful running on the balls of your feet in a circle.
- Remember to use the 5 positions of the feet as places to start and finish.



Ballet Dancing: French vocabulary

Dictionary of Classical Ballet

TERM	PRONUNCIATION	MEANING
Plie	plee ay	to bend
Releve	rel u vay	to raise
Tendu	tahn dew	to stretch
A Terre	ah teyr	on the ground
Degage	day ga shay	to disengage
Rond Je Jambe	rawn duh zhahmb	circle of the leg
En Dehors	ahn duh or	outside
En Dedans	ahn duh dahn	inside
Fondu	fawn dew	to melt
Coupe	koo pay	to cut
Passe	pa say	to pass
Develope	dayv low pay	to develop
En L'Air	ahn leyr	in the air
Frappe	fra pay	to strike
Soutenu	soot uh new	to sustain
Petit Battement	puh tee bat mahn	small beat
Grand Battement	grahn bat mahn	big beat
Port De Bras	porre duh brah	carriage of the arms
Croise	kwah zay	crossed
En Face	ahn fahss	facing front
Efface	ay fah say	shaded
Ecarte	ay kar tay	separated, wide open
En Croix	ahn kwah	in a cross
Devant	duh vahn	in front
Derriere	deh ree eyr	behind
En avant	ahn a vahn	forward
En arriere	ahn a ree ayr	backward

The words used to describe the movements in ballet are French and they are universally understood by dancers. If a ballet dancer were to go to a class in any country they would be able to understand what steps to do even if they did not speak the language of the country they were in.

ACTIVITY BOX



Discuss in groups what ballet moves/positions you think might be described by these French words.

Bingo: Make a grid that is 3 squares by 2. Chose terms from the list of French words in the first column, write 1 in each box. Your teacher will read out the definitions in English. If it matches with your word cross it out. As soon as all your words have been crossed off raise your hand and say **BINGO**.

Acting in Ballet

In ballet, there is no talking at all! The whole story is told by the dancers using their body.

How do dancers show who their character is and what they are doing during a ballet? It's not through dance steps alone – it's a combination of dance steps, **facial expressions and mime** that help tell the story.

During a traditional ballet there will be scenes which use a lot of mime to help the audience understand the story. Mime is a combination of gestures and movement to tell a story without any words. At the beginning of *The Canterville Ghost*, two of the dancers will come onto the stage and explain some of the mimes they will use in the ballet.

Facial expressions are also an important way of showing how a character is feeling. For example, if a character is happy and excited the dancer might smile widely as if they are laughing or if the character is frightened or scared, the dancer might open their eyes and mouth widely and place their hands on their face.

The choreographer (the person who creates the dances) may also choose dance steps that make the dancers move in a certain way to give the audience clues as to what sort of character they are playing. For example, the twins may have lots of quick, fast movements as they are cheeky and lively characters and The Ghost may move slowly when he is plotting to scare someone!



ACTIVITY BOX



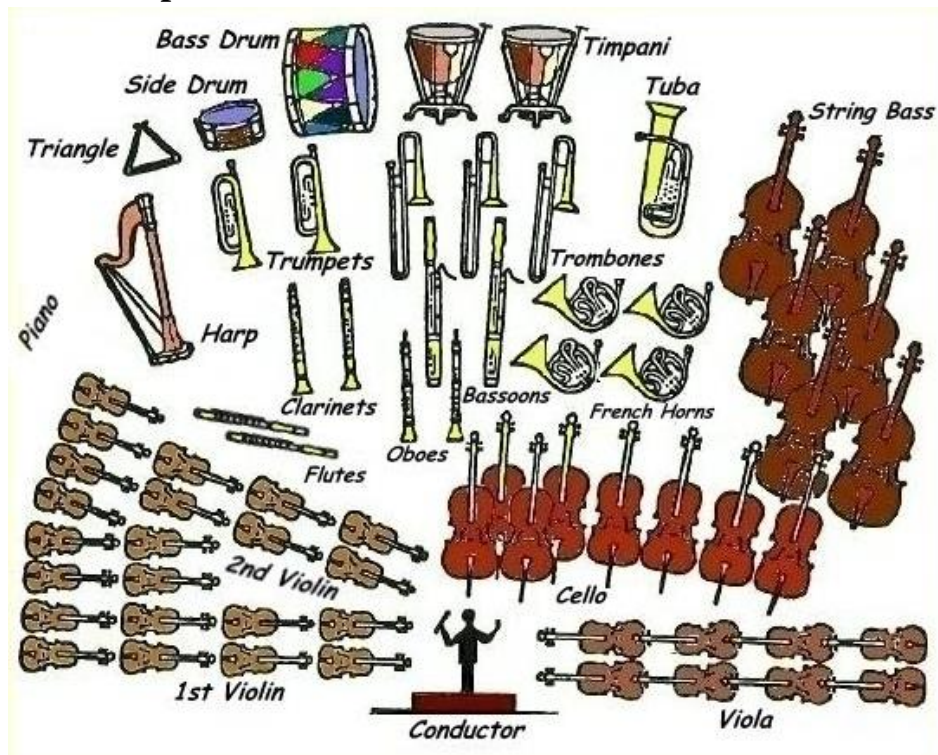
In groups, choose one of the following still images (frozen poses/tableaux). Create one frozen image to present that includes all the characters and tells the story of the moment you have chosen. Remember to focus on the position of your body and your facial expression. Be creative! You want your audience to know exactly what character you are without any words. Use your whole body to do that. Perform your still image to the rest of the class and see if they can guess which one it is.

1. The Ghost frightens Lady Canterville and her household staff.
2. The Otis Family arrive from America
3. The twins tease and ambush the Ghost.
4. Virginia fulfils the prophecy and follows the Ghost to the other world. Goblins and ghosts try to scare her.
5. Everyone searches for Virginia
6. Cecil and Virginia have a party to celebrate their wedding.

Music at the ballet

The person who writes the music is called the **composer**. At the theatre, the music will be played by a **live orchestra**, which is led by the **conductor**. The orchestra sit with their instruments in an area called the **pit** underneath the stage. See if you can spot the tip of the conductor's baton during the performance!

An orchestra is made up of these instruments:



ACTIVITY BOX

Close your eyes. Have a listen to the snippets of music from the *The Canterville Ghost* score, which are attached to this pack, and have a good think about the following for each extract.

- ♪ What do you think could be happening on stage right now?
- ♪ How does this music make you feel?
- ♪ How do you think the dancers are moving on the stage and what type of dance steps could they be performing to this music?
- ♪ What instruments would you use to play these snippets and how would it affect the mood if you used a different instrument?

In small groups, pick an extract of your choice and have a go at creating some dance steps to the music. Think about what mood you would like to create and what type of character you would like to portray.

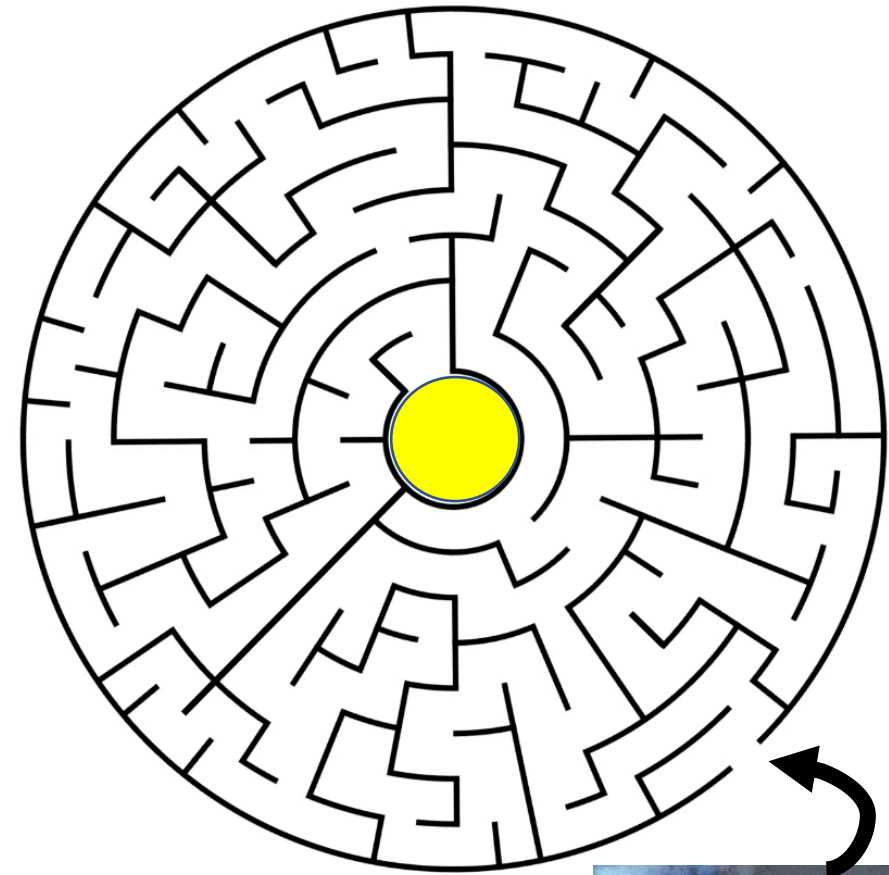
PUZZLES



See if you can find the words listed below amongst the grid! They can be found vertically, horizontally, diagonally or backwards...

BALLET	OSCARWILDE
HAUNT	OTIS
CANTERVILLE	ROOKS
GHOST	SIMON
GOBLINS	TWINS
MAIDS	VIRGINIA

A	J	S	P	V	S	W	S	N	S	A	S
C	I	X	D	I	O	T	I	R	P	C	N
X	A	N	M	I	E	D	T	F	A	M	I
I	H	O	I	L	A	Q	O	N	S	I	L
O	N	H	L	G	S	M	T	R	T	G	B
E	U	A	L	N	R	E	B	Y	Y	H	O
Q	B	A	F	V	R	I	R	Z	C	O	G
X	L	L	E	V	M	H	V	O	E	S	J
E	D	L	I	W	R	A	C	S	O	T	D
A	E	L	S	N	I	W	T	G	I	K	J
Y	L	H	A	U	N	T	T	P	N	R	S
E	Z	X	V	I	M	W	J	I	T	O	H



Help the Ghost escape from the trouble-making twins and get back to his private quarters.



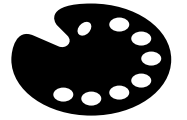


PUZZLES

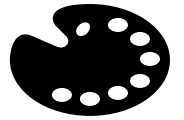
Help Virginia fulfil the prophecy and free the Ghost. Chose the correct path that leads to the Ghost's other world avoiding the ghosts and goblins.



Colour in the naughty twins



Colour in the Ghost



Colour in a ballerina

