



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



Alone or with your family, 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 and see if your family 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.