

Lesson Plans for Piano (Age 4-9)

Lesson 1: “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy”

Objective: Introduction to staccato, legato, and rhythm.

- **Listening Assignment:** Listen to “*Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*” and identify high vs. low notes.
 - **Activity:** After listening, students will explore the keyboard, mimicking the light, delicate touch of the celesta (staccato) by playing simple patterns.
 - **Piano Practice:** Short, 4-5 note staccato melodies.
 - **Creative Activity:** Draw a fairy while listening to the piece.
 - **Wrap-up:** Discuss how the music “dances.”
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Lesson 2: “March”

Objective: Introduction to march rhythms and dynamics.

- **Listening Assignment:** Listen to “*March*” and clap along to the beat, paying attention to when the music gets loud or soft.
 - **Activity:** March around the room while keeping in time with the music.
 - **Piano Practice:** Practice playing C-G march-like patterns, focusing on forte and piano dynamics.
 - **Creative Activity:** Have students imagine and draw what they see in a parade while listening.
 - **Wrap-up:** Discuss the difference between soft and loud (piano vs. forte).
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Lesson 3: “Waltz of the Flowers”

Objective: Introduction to waltz rhythm (3/4 time).

- **Listening Assignment:** Listen to “*Waltz of the Flowers*” and feel the “1-2-3” waltz rhythm.
 - **Activity:** Practice swaying side to side to the 3/4 rhythm, counting aloud.
 - **Piano Practice:** Simple chord progressions in 3/4 time (C-G-C).
 - **Creative Activity:** Create flower petals from paper while listening to the music.
 - **Wrap-up:** Discuss how the music “flows” like a waltz.
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Lesson 4: “Russian Dance (Trepak)”

Objective: Fast tempo, understanding accents in music.

- **Listening Assignment:** Listen to “*Russian Dance*” and clap on the accents (strong beats).
 - **Activity:** Dance or jump to the strong beats in the music to feel the energy.
 - **Piano Practice:** Play short, fast patterns emphasizing accented beats (C-E-G).
 - **Creative Activity:** Color a scene of the Russian Dance and share their favorite part.
 - **Wrap-up:** Discuss how fast tempos create excitement in the music.
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Lesson 5: “Arabian Dance”

Objective: Understanding legato, slow tempos, and mood.

- **Listening Assignment:** Listen to “*Arabian Dance*” and describe how it makes them feel (calm, mysterious).
 - **Activity:** Move arms slowly like a snake, mimicking the legato phrasing of the music.
 - **Piano Practice:** Play slow, smooth scales, focusing on connected notes (legato).
 - **Creative Activity:** Create a desert or nighttime scene while listening to the music.
 - **Wrap-up:** Discuss how slow, connected notes create a calm atmosphere.
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These lessons focus on listening, movement, and creativity to keep young students engaged while introducing important musical concepts through the iconic music of *The Nutcracker*.

LISTENING ASSIGNMENT LIST

Dance of Sugar Plum Fairy:

[Instrumental]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFjveJ5sgeQ>

[Ballet Performance]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zV1qLYukTH8>

March:

[Instrumental]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9t1AeJm7XF0>

[Ballet Performance]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfCSIE2tQco>

Waltz of Flower:

[Instrumental]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zp1aDnVySf8>

[Ballet Performance]: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_NWdj8PCdYE

Russian Dance:

[Instrumental]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmQjhwsPRDE>

[Ballet Performance]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-qVbWI5TYg>

Arabian Dance:

[Instrumental]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQOBp9Ltbuo>

[Ballet Performance]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLNytVwZq1w&t=86s>