

ExxonMobil

DISCOVERY SERIES



The Wonderful Wizard of Oz with Open Dance Project



OPEN DANCE PROJECT

THE
HOBBY
CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

2026-2027 Season 5th Grade Curriculum Guide

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About the Performance

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

Open Dance Project's dance theater adaptation of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," follows Dorothy as she is swept away from her life on a farm in Kansas to a magical Land of OZ, where she learns about friendship and courage with her rag tag group of friends – Scarecrow, Tinman, and Lion. Dance theater is a dance-based art form that combines dance with storytelling elements including theatrical dialogue, sets, and props to make dance more accessible and engaging. Great for 5th graders, this humorous and poignant coming-of-age tale features Open Dance Project's signature athleticism, theatrical antics, aerial dance, acrobatics, and good old fashioned fun!

The audience will enjoy a dance theater performance with 12 dancers and aerialists, with recorded music and narration adapted from the 1900 novel of the same name by L. Frank Baum.



Open Dance Project

Open Dance Project (ODP) is an ensemble-based dance theater company dedicated to developing and presenting world-class performances in Houston and serving as a cultural resource through educational and community programming. Since 2015, Open Dance Project's performance and education programs have been creating memorable, interdisciplinary experiences that break down conventional barriers between artists and audience members to make dance more accessible and meaningful. Collapsing the distance between the subject and the stage through critically acclaimed immersive performances and a commitment to accessibility, ODP's programs simultaneously demystify dance and make dance matter.

SCAN
ME



opendanceproject.org



About the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts opened to the public in 2002 in downtown Houston, at the edge of the city's renowned Theater District. The district is home to several major performing arts organizations, including Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet, Houston Symphony, Performing Arts Houston, Theatre Under The Stars, DaCamera, and Alley Theatre. Located beside Tranquility Park and one block from Houston City Hall, the Hobby Center was named in honor of former Texas lieutenant governor and Houston businessman William P. Hobby Jr. after his family foundation made a significant contribution to the project. The Hobby Center was built on the site formerly occupied by the Houston Music Hall and Sam Houston Coliseum, both of which were demolished in 1998. Today, the Hobby Center includes three performance spaces designed specifically for theater, music, and live performance experiences:

- **Sarofim Hall** is a 2,650-seat proscenium theater designed to accommodate large-scale touring Broadway productions and major live performances. Resident companies include Theatre Under The Stars and Broadway Across America. The hall's design combines grandeur with theatrical elegance. Golden latticework frames the space, while multi-storied gold-leaf columns stand in contrast to deep midnight-blue walls. Overhead, the Joe and Lee Jamail Celestial Dome Ceiling features twinkling fiber-optic stars arranged to mirror the Texas night sky.
- **Zilkha Hall** is an intimate 500-seat "jewel-box" theater, a term used to describe smaller performance spaces designed with rich detail, warmth, and close audience connection. Home to many of Houston's local arts organizations, the hall features excellent acoustics, deep-rose tones, and walnut wood accents across two seating levels.
- **The Founders Club** is an intimate live music venue with cabaret-style seating. Guests may purchase tables of four or be seated with others, creating a social and relaxed atmosphere. The series features both local performers and nationally recognized artists in a format not commonly found in Houston. Concerts span a variety of genres, including Broadway songbook, jazz, and world music.

ExxonMobil DISCOVERY SERIES

The ExxonMobil Discovery Series is the Hobby Center's flagship education program, welcoming 5th grade students from across Houston to experience live performances by local and touring artists. Aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the series brings dance, music, and theater to life in ways that connect directly to what students are learning in the classroom. Every performance is free—including transportation—and includes curriculum materials and artist Q&As that deepen the experience.

For the 2026-27 school year, the Hobby Center is thrilled to be partnering with 22+ school districts to serve nearly 50,000 5th graders.

Special thanks to lead underwriter ExxonMobil and generous supporters: Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts, Elkins Foundation, George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation, Albert and Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, The John M. O'Quinn Foundation, Texas Commission on the Arts, H-E-B, Vivian L. Smith Foundation, and Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion

Theater Etiquette

Before you come to the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Please take some time to talk with your students about what to expect. Going to a live performance is a group experience unlike any other, and many students are more familiar with going to the movies or sporting events. Please help them prepare for what they'll see and how they should act. Other things to Keep in Mind: Make sure your students use the restroom before they leave school or at the theater before the show. If you get up during the performance, you may miss the best part! The performance runs approximately one hour long with no intermission. In entering or exiting the theater, safety is the primary concern. Please follow instructions from the house managers and ushers in taking your seats.

Going to a performance is different than going to a movie:

- This production is performed live. The performers can see, hear and react to the audience!
- Audience members can show the performers when they appreciate their performance! If something is funny, you can laugh! If the performers are doing a great job, then you can clap!
- Sometimes, the performers will ask you to participate by singing or clapping; please do not talk unless the performers ask you to!
- At the end of the show, the performers will bow. This is called a curtain call. If you really loved the show, you can give them a standing ovation to show that you appreciate their hard work!
- School clothes are appropriate, but some people like to dress up to go to the theater. Just make sure you are comfortable.

Going to a performance is the same as going to a movie:

- The lights dim before the performance begins and the theater stays dark during the show.
- Audience members are expected to stay quiet in their seats during the performance.
- Audience members may NOT take any pictures or video during the performance. (This is distracting to the performers and other audience members and this show contains copyrighted artistic material.)
- All cell phones and other electronic devices should be powered OFF or put on SILENT as soon as you enter the theater.

VISIT RESTROOM BEFORE - NOT DURING.

ARRIVE EARLY.

QUIET & SEATED DURING SHOW.

NO PHOTOS OR VIDEOS DURING SHOW.

PHONES OFF/SILENCED.

RESPECT THE SPACE & OTHERS.

LISTEN & ENGAGE.

APPLAUD APPROPRIATELY.

Vocabulary

- **Aunt Em** - Dorothy's aunt and guardian, who lives on a farm with Uncle Henry. She's older and often tired from working hard on the farm.
- **Boq, the Mayor of Munchkinland** - The leader of Munchkinland. Boq is very grateful to Dorothy for ending the Wicked Witch's rule and throws a big party in her honor.
- **City of Emeralds/Emerald City** - A stunning city made of marble, where everyone wears green spectacles. The Wizard of Oz lives here, and Dorothy hopes he can help her get back home.
- **Dorothy** - The main character of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. She's a young girl from Kansas who goes on an adventure in Oz after a tornado sweeps her away.
- **Glinda, the Good Witch** - A kind witch who helps Dorothy when she arrives in Oz and protects her on her journey by giving her a special kiss.
- **Kansas** - A state in the Midwest of the United States, known for farming crops like corn and wheat. Before Europeans arrived, it was home to the Kaw people, also called the Kansa, a Native American tribe whose name can mean "people of the wind."
- **Land of Dainty China** - A part of Oz where everything, even the people, is made of delicate, breakable porcelain china.
- **Land of Oz** - A magical country created by L. Frank Baum, with unique regions and characters, including Munchkinland, Winkie Country, and the Emerald City. Oz has both good and wicked witches.
- **Magic Golden Cap** - A cap decorated with jewels that gives the person who wears it control over the Winged Monkeys three times. The Wicked Witch uses it to boss around the Winged Monkeys.
- **Oz, the Great Wizard** - A powerful wizard who rules Oz and is said to grant wishes. Dorothy and her friends travel to see him, hoping he'll help Dorothy get home.
- **Scarecrow** - A scarecrow Dorothy meets on her journey. He comes to life and joins her to ask the Wizard for a brain.
- **Tornado/Cyclone** - A powerful, swirling storm with strong winds. Tornadoes often happen in Tornado Alley, an area in the U.S. where tornadoes are common.
- **Tin Woodman** - A man made of tin who was cursed by a wicked witch. Dorothy helps him by oiling his rusted joints, and he joins the journey to ask for a heart.
- **The Wicked Witch of the East** - A cruel witch who once ruled Munchkinland. She is destroyed when Dorothy's house lands on her, leaving only her magic silver shoes behind.
- **The Wicked Witch of the West** - A wicked ruler of Winkie Country who controls the Winged Monkeys and keeps the Winkies as her servants.
- **The Winged Monkeys** - Monkeys with wings who live in Oz and can talk and fly. They are clever and can be controlled by whoever has the Magic Golden Cap.
- **The Yellow Brick Road** - A path made of yellow bricks that Dorothy follows to the Emerald City to find the Wizard.

PRE-SHOW

DISCUSSION

Adventure & Courage

- Dorothy is suddenly taken somewhere completely unfamiliar. How do you think you would feel if you were in her place?
- Have you ever done something that seemed scary at first but turned out better than you expected?
- What does it mean to be courageous? Can someone be brave even if they feel afraid?



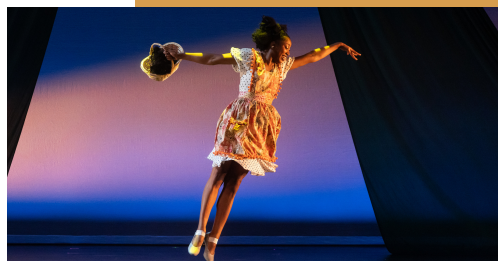
Storytelling Through Dance

- This performance tells much of its story through movement instead of spoken dialogue. How can dancers show emotions without using words?
- What clues—such as facial expressions, music, costumes, or movement—might help you understand what's happening on stage?
- As you watch, what kinds of movements do you think could show joy, fear, determination, or friendship?



Friendship & Teamwork

- What qualities make someone a good friend or teammate?
- Why is it important that people with different strengths work together?
- How can encouraging others help everyone succeed?



All performance photos by Lynn Lane

PRE-SHOW

ACTIVITIES



Courage Toolkit

Think about a time you faced something unfamiliar or difficult. Create a “courage toolkit” with three qualities, people, or strategies that could help someone move forward even when they feel afraid.

Design a Magical World

Draw an imaginary world and describe its colors, residents, and rules. How could dancers bring it to life?

Movement Tells a Story

Working with a partner or small group, create three frozen poses (tableaux) that show a beginning, middle, and end of an adventure. Can your classmates guess the story without any words?

Weather Science

Research how tornadoes form and why Kansas is part of “Tornado Alley.” Create a simple diagram or infographic that explains tornado safety and the science behind these powerful storms.

Career Exploration

Explore the many careers that bring a dance production to life. Beyond the dancers, who designs the costumes, creates the lighting, choreographs the movement, manages the stage, or operates the sound?

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY

Worksheet - Exploring Thematic Connections

Name: _____

Date: _____

SCAN ME



The Dust Bowl and The Great Depression:

The author L. Frank Baum wrote his novel *The Wizard of Oz* in 1900, thirty years before the Great Depression, but his description of Kansas as a gray and dusty place with little joy and color reflects Depression-Era images of Kansas and the Great Plains of the United States in the 1930s. Learn more about the Dust Storms in Kansas and the harm they caused to the people and towns.

[Click or scan
to read more!](#)

How Tornadoes Form

Tornadoes: In this story, Dorothy and her home are picked up by the vortex of a tornado. Kansas is part of "Tornado Alley," an area stretching from central Canada to the central United States that is frequently hit by tornadoes.



Courtesy of Library of Congress,
"[Dust storm, Elkhart, Kan.]," May 1937

SCAN ME



[Click or scan
to read more!](#)

SCAN ME



[Click or scan
to read more!](#)

The World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893: The Wonderful Wizard of Oz is often said to have been inspired by the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, which L. Frank Baum attended many times. Although Baum never specifically claimed the Expo as inspiration, the similarities between "The White City," a cluster of 12 neo-classical buildings built specifically for the Chicago fair, and Baum's shining "Emerald City" are striking. Learn more about L. Frank Baum and The Chicago World's Fair in 1893.



Art by Mawhyah Milton
Source photo of L. Frank Baum: Library of Congress.

PRINTABLE ACTIVITY

Part 1: Worksheet - Dance in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

Name: _____ Date: _____

Read about five dance styles featured in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.
Then use what you learn to complete Part 2.

1. MODERN DANCE

On the Yellow Brick Road, bouncing, falling, swinging, and weight-sharing create a playful sense of discovery. In the Emerald City, precise lines, unison movement, and controlled flow suggest strength and order. Modern dance often uses bare feet, gravity, and the floor to create a wide range of movement.



[Click/Scan](#)

2. CONTEMPORARY JAZZ DANCE

The Munchkinettes and Winkies use rhythm, musicality, accented movements, and athletic skills to engage the audience. Contemporary jazz connects concert dance with popular and social dance traditions while emphasizing energy, style, and performance.



[Click/Scan](#)

3. BALLET

In the Land of Dainty China, the Princess performs ballet steps such as pas de chat, pas de basque, and tour jeté. Ballet developed in European courts, uses French terminology, and combines precise technique with graceful, presentational movement.



[Click/Scan](#)

4. HIP HOP

The Tin Woodman uses elements of hip hop, including uprock, breaking, locking, roboting, boogaloo, and popping. Hip hop grew from Black and Latino communities in the United States and continues to evolve through improvisation, innovation, competition, and social dance.



[Click/Scan](#)

5. AERIAL DANCE

During the Cyclone, dancers climb and move through aerial fabrics. Glinda performs on a circular apparatus called a lyra. Aerial dance combines movement with suspended equipment, allowing performers to create shapes, spins, and pathways in the air.



[Click/Scan](#)

As you watch, notice how each style helps communicate character, setting, and mood.

PRINTABLE ACTIVITY

Part 2: Worksheet - Dance in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

Name: _____ Date: _____



1. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

Use each term from the word bank once.

Modern Dance • Contemporary Jazz Dance • Ballet • Hip Hop • Aerial Dance

1. On the Yellow Brick Road, dancers use _____ to show playfulness and fun while dancing barefoot and connecting to the ground.
2. The Munchkinettes and Winkies perform _____, which emphasizes rhythm, musicality, and showmanship.
3. In the Land of Dainty China, the Princess uses _____ steps such as pas de chat and tour jeté.
4. The Tin Woodman introduces elements of _____, a style rooted in urban neighborhoods and African American social dance.
5. During the Cyclone, dancers perform _____ using silks and aerial fabrics.



2. MATCH THE DANCE STYLES

Draw a line to match each style with its description.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Modern Dance | ☐ | ☐ Uses French terminology and emphasizes grace. |
| Contemporary Jazz Dance | ☐ | ☐ Includes flying and movement in the air using fabrics. |
| Ballet | ☐ | ☐ Uses varied movements and connects dancers to the floor. |
| Hip Hop | ☐ | ☐ Focuses on rhythm, musicality, and audience engagement. |
| Aerial Dance | ☐ | ☐ Is rooted in African American social dance and includes uprock and breaking. |



3. REFLECT

Which dance style do you enjoy or want to try? What makes it interesting to you?



4. CREATE YOUR OWN DANCE STYLE

Invent a dance style for a magical character in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

Dance style name: _____

What would the movements look and feel like?

Which character would perform it, and why?

FIFTH GRADE

TEKS Alignment

ELAR & READING- §110.7

TEKS: 5.6(A), 5.7(C), 5.9 (A), 5.10 (A)

Student Learning Connection:

Students analyze character development, theme, and plot while interpreting how movement, music, narration, and visual elements work together to communicate meaning in a dance theatre adaptation.

Science -§112.16

TEKS: 5.1(A), 5.1(C), 5.119(A)

Student Learning Connection:

Students investigate tornadoes and weather patterns, use scientific observations to explain how Earth's systems create severe weather, and connect science concepts to Dorothy's journey from Kansas to Oz.

Mathematics - §111.7

TEKS: 5.4(H), 5.5(A), 5.8(C)

Student Learning Connection:

Students apply measurement, mapping, patterns, and data analysis while exploring Dorothy's journey, sequencing events, estimating distances, and interpreting visual information from the performance.

Social Studies - §113.16

TEKS: 5.8(A), 5.9(B), 5.12(A)

Student Learning Connection:

Students examine maps, regions, and weather patterns while exploring Kansas, compare real and fictional settings, and investigate how people adapt to different environments and communities.

Health - §115.17

TEKS: 5.1 (A), 5.2(E), 5.4(A-B)

Student Learning Connection:

Students reflect on courage, perseverance, emotional awareness, healthy decision-making, and the value of friendship while considering how characters respond to challenges throughout their journey.

Fine Arts -§117.118-19

TEKS: 5.1(A), 5.2(B), 5.3(C), 5.4 (A)

Student Learning Connection:

Students explore how dance communicates story, emotion, and character through movement, choreography, music, costumes, and stage design while responding to and interpreting a live dance theatre performance.

FIFTH GRADE

STAAR Alignment



RLA

STAAR Reporting Category:

*Comprehension; Multiple Genres;
Author's Purpose & Craft*

Student Learning Connection

Analyze how Dorothy and her companions grow throughout their journey by examining character development, theme, and plot. Interpret how movement, music, narration, and visual storytelling communicate meaning in a dance theatre adaptation.

Mathematics

STAAR Reporting Category:

*Patterns, Data Analysis, and
Mathematical Relationships*

Student Learning Connection

Recognize patterns, sequencing, mapping, measurement, and data while following Dorothy's journey. Use timelines, maps, and visual information from the performance to strengthen mathematical reasoning and problem-solving.

Science

STAAR Reporting Category:

*Earth and Space; Scientific
Investigation and Reasoning*

Student Learning Connection

Investigate how tornadoes form, explore the weather systems that affect Kansas, and use scientific observations to explain how Earth's processes connect to Dorothy's journey from Kansas to Oz.

FIFTH GRADE

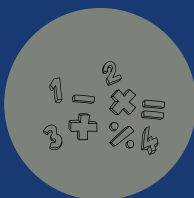
Curriculum Connections



English Language Arts

In The Classroom

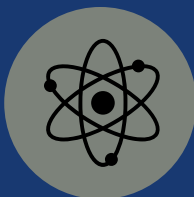
Explore how Dorothy and her companions grow throughout their journey by analyzing character traits, motivations, conflicts, and theme. Students can compare the original story with the dance theatre adaptation and discuss how movement, music, and narration communicate meaning.



Mathematics

In The Classroom

Apply mapping, sequencing, measurement, and data analysis by tracing Dorothy's journey along the Yellow Brick Road. Students can estimate distances, organize events using timelines, and identify patterns throughout the story.



Science

In The Classroom

Investigate tornadoes, weather patterns, and the Earth's systems that create severe storms. Students can explore how tornadoes form, why Kansas experiences frequent tornadoes, and how weather influences both real and fictional journeys.



Social Studies

In The Classroom

Compare the geography and environment of Kansas with the fictional Land of Oz. Students can investigate maps, regions, and historical connections—including the 1893 World's Fair and early American life, that influenced The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.



Health / SEL

In The Classroom

Reflect on courage, resilience, empathy, and teamwork as Dorothy and her friends overcome challenges together. Students can discuss healthy decision-making, problem-solving, and how supportive friendships help people face difficult situations.

Discussion



Performance Reflection

- What moment in the performance stayed with you the longest? Why?
- Which character did you connect with most, and what did you learn from them?
- What surprised you most about seeing *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* performed through dance?

Courage & Self-Discovery

- Which character showed the greatest growth during the story? What changed?
- Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and Lion believed they were missing something. What did they discover about themselves?
- Have you ever discovered you were stronger, braver, or more capable than you first believed?



Friendship & Teamwork



- How did Dorothy and her friends help one another overcome challenges?
- What qualities made their group successful as a team?
- Why is it important that everyone brings different strengths to a group?

Storytelling Through Dance

- How did the dancers use movement, facial expressions, costumes, or music to tell the story?
- If you could ask the choreographer or dancers one question about creating this performance, what would you ask?



POST-SHOW Activities

Reflective Writing

- **Character Journal**

Write a journal entry from the perspective of Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, Lion, or another character. Describe what they learned during their journey and how they changed by the end of the story.



Movement & Performance

- **Dance the Story**

Working with a partner or small group, create a short movement sequence that tells one scene from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* without using words. Perform your scene and see if classmates can identify it.

Create Design

- **Design a New Land in Oz**

Imagine Dorothy discovers one more magical land before returning home. Draw a map and describe its landscape, characters, challenges, and how it would fit into the adventure.



Communication & Collaboration

- **Oz News Report**

Create a television news report covering a major event from Oz, such as Dorothy's arrival, the Emerald City, or the defeat of the Wicked Witch. Include interviews with characters and eyewitnesses.

Career Spotlight

- **Costume Designer Challenge**

Design a costume for a new or existing character in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Explain how color, fabric, and accessories communicate the character's personality and movement, then learn how costume designers help bring stories to life on stage.



POST-SHOW

PRINTABLE ACTIVITY

Worksheet - Color, Setting, & Meaning in Oz

Name: _____ Date: _____

L. Frank Baum published *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in 1900. The story uses memorable colors and settings to build the world of Oz. Work with your group to examine how color helped communicate setting, mood, and meaning in the performance.

CHOOSE YOUR GROUP



YELLOW

• Yellow Brick Road



GREEN

• Emerald City



BLUE

• Munchkinland



1. FIND EVIDENCE

Color or place: _____

What did you notice on stage? Consider costumes, lighting, scenery, props, and movement.



2. INTERPRET THE CHOICES

What mood or feeling did the color create?

What might the color or setting communicate about this part of Oz?



3. CREATE & PRESENT

Create a poster representing your group's color or place. Include one visual from the performance, three descriptive words, and an explanation of what the color communicated. Use the back of this page or a separate sheet.

Descriptive word 1: _____

Descriptive word 2: _____

Descriptive word 3: _____



4. REFLECT

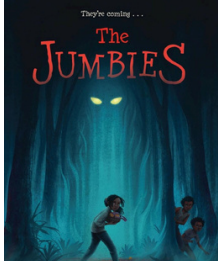
After the presentations, how did color help the audience understand the different places, characters, or moods in Oz?



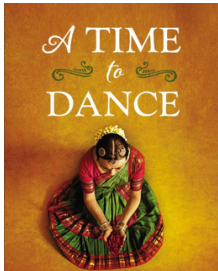
BONUS: Where do colors communicate meaning in everyday life? Give one example.

FIFTH GRADE RESOURCES

Books



"DThe Jumbies by Tracey Baptiste
In this Caribbean-inspired fantasy, Corinne must confront creatures from folklore to save her island.



A Time to Dance by Padma Venkatraman
Veda, a young dancer in India faces a life-changing accident and works to reclaim her identity.

Websites

Open Dance Project



Learn more about this performance group and the options they offer to come to your campus

Link: [Open Dance Project](#)

PBS Kids: The Wizard of Oz



Explore the science behind The Wizard of Oz

Link: [PBS Kids](#)

National Geographic Kids:

Tornadoes



Learn all about tornadoes, how they form, and what they look like. This connects to the tornado that brings Dorothy to Oz!

Link: [National Geographic](#)

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**Let us know what you think.
Please take our survey!**



**[Post-Show
Student Survey](#)**



**[Post-Show
Teacher Survey](#)**