

Cricket

THEME

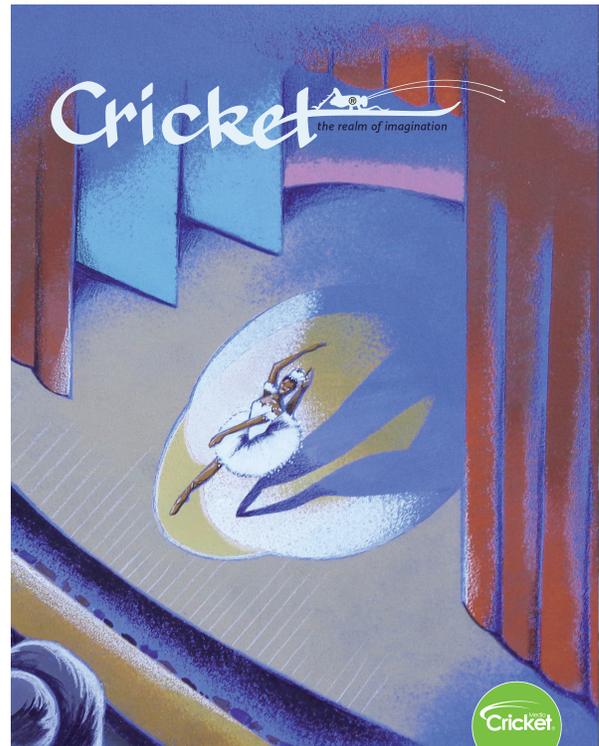
The arts are alive and well in this issue of *Cricket*. This guide examines three different stories about young people who are encouraged by teachers or relatives to pursue creative activities.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What attracts students to the arts?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will determine themes and analyze their development.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop over the course of a text.
- Students will assess how point of view shapes the style of a text.
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.
- Students will conduct research projects.
- Students will use maps.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

- **Finding the Perfect Sandy**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~750L
- **The Boy Who Became a Dancer**
Biography, ~850L
- **Farewell**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~950L

Finding the Perfect Sandy

pp. 5–10, Contemporary Realistic

Fiction

Use this story about a school play to review finding theme.



RESOURCES

- Theme Worksheet

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will determine themes and analyze their development.
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **avant-garde** (p. 6) unusual or experimental
- **potential** (p. 7) a quality something has that can be developed to make it better
- **blatant** (p. 9) very obvious
- **stellar** (p. 10) exceptionally good

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What attracts students to the arts?

Explain that this story is about students who are involved in theater, both on the stage and behind the stage. Invite students to share ways they participate in music, dance, theater, writing, painting, or other creative pursuits. Ask students to explain how they came to take part in the arts and what they enjoy about it.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Then write the sentences below on the board and have students complete them using the key terms. Review responses. Remind students to look for these words as they read the selection.

1. I'm training to be a singer and I know I have the _____ to be a star.
2. Our school newspaper said my talent show performance was _____.
3. My brother says the songs I write are odd, but I think they're _____.
4. It's _____ that my brother is jealous of my song-writing talent.

READ & DISCUSS

After students have read, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. What problem does Ashley need to solve in the story?
2. Why does Ashley worry that Farley is the wrong dog for the play?
3. Why did Ashley decide not to audition for *Annie*?
4. What does Ashley learn about perfection from Mr. Loomis?
5. How would you describe Ashley?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Theme

INSTRUCT: Review the definition of theme: a message about life or human nature that an author presents in a literary work. Explain that the theme of a story is often connected to the lesson a character learns. Point out that themes often sound like good advice. For example, “sometimes you have to stand up for what you believe,” and “actions speak louder than words.” Then explain that students can identify theme by thinking about the events and characters in a story. Use a familiar story, such as “Goldilocks and the Three Bears,” to help students practice identifying theme.

ASSESS: Distribute the *Theme* worksheet to all students and have them work in pairs to complete it. When all students are finished, invite them to share their themes and the details that support them.

EXTEND

Science Reiterate that Ashley wonders how Hollywood movie-makers find dog actors. Have students conduct research to learn about animals in movies. Include topics such as how movie animals are trained, how a person becomes a movie animal trainer, or famous movie animals. Have students prepare a short presentation with visuals for the class.

Name _____

Theme Worksheet

Write your answers to the questions below.

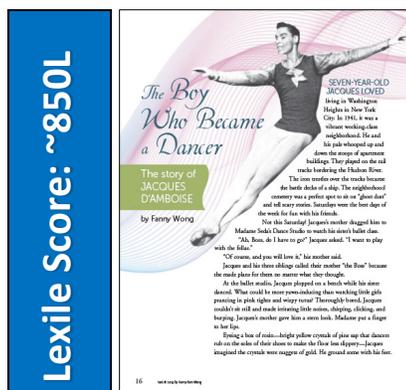
1. What lesson does Ashley learn about herself and about life?	
2. How does Ashley learn this lesson in the story?	
3. What message is the author trying to share? State this message, or theme, in your own words.	

Write: How does the story title connect to the theme or themes you identified?

The Boy Who Became a Dancer

pp. 16–20, Biography

Teach students how to analyze a biographical essay by examining this biography of dancer and choreographer, Jacques d'Amboise.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a biographical essay.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop over the course of a text.
- Students will conduct research projects.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **vibrant** (p. 16) having great life, activity, and energy
- **prestigious** (p. 17) respected and admired
- **stunned** (p. 19) surprised someone very much
- **rowdy** (p. 19) rough and noisy

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What attracts students to the arts?

Tell students that some people are inspired to pursue an activity by another person, such as a teacher, or by an experience, such as seeing a beautiful painting. Invite students to share people and things that have inspired them to pursue activities, artistic or otherwise. Explain that this article is about a boy who was inspired to become a dancer.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Then have students work in groups of four to play charades using these words. Tell one group member to act out a word while the others guess the word. Then have them switch roles. Explain that the person acting out the word may not speak or make noises. Limit each round of play to one minute. Remind students to look for these words as they read.

READ & DISCUSS

After students have read the story, use the questions below to prompt discussion:

1. What was Jacques like as a child?
2. Compare the Boss and Madame Seda. How are they similar?
3. How did Jacques's mother influence him?
4. Why did Jacques love the streets?
5. How was studying ballet different from having fun in the streets?
6. What important choice did Jacques make?
7. What might his life have been like if he hadn't made this choice?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyzing a Biography

INSTRUCT: Tell students that when they read a biography, they should look for information about events in the person's life and determine how these events shaped his or her life. As an example, point out that being forced to go to his sister's dance class is one event in Jacques's life. Discuss how this event shaped his life. Then have students reread the article and use sticky notes to identify other events in Jacques's life. Instruct them to use a T-chart to record the events and to note their effects. Ask students to share the information in their charts.

ASSESS: Have students create a 3" × 6" panel comic strip that illustrates events in Jacques's life, as well as their impact. Have students take turns presenting their strips to the class.

EXTEND

Writing Remind students that this article talks about Jacques d'Amboise's life up to 1953. Have students conduct research to find out what Jacques did in the rest of his life. Then have them write a short essay that connects this information to what they learned about him in this article. Invite students to share their essays.

