

Reel to Real Resource - Reel to Real is a dance that is in two sections, the whole dance lasts for approximately 10 minutes and can be danced by children and adults.

Section 1 - The first section has a creative element and during the creation of the dance we took the children's movement as the focus. We gave the young dancers different creative tasks inspired by the folk dance element of the piece, for example, arches, and asking the children to create a series of arches with a partner. The first section of Reel to Real can be anything that you want it to be, there are no boundaries and the participant's creativity is to be encouraged! Our version of Reel to Real encouraged the children to make a series of duets (dances for two people), the dance artists put the duets together using a number of tools and methods.

Variety was added to the creative section of the dance by moving the duets and bigger groups on and off the performance area by running, or exploring different methods of travelling (rolling, jumping or crawling). You can also use a theme to change and move performers for example, acting as if they are a huge brush and sweeping dancers off the stage. To break up the group work we used moments of unison (dancing all together performing the same movements) which can be taught or even taken from the warm up. Unison is also good for building the intensity of the piece, this is often used to create a crescendo starting with one dancer and building to everyone joining in to perform the movement together. We used the travelling movements as a transition from the creative section of the dance to the folk section with a mass of dancers moving to their positions so eventually from seeming chaos comes symmetry and order.

The music for the creative section can be free flowing and generic and works really well with live musicians. The music for the second section is any 64 bar jig, reel or polka or 32 bar tune repeated.

Section 2 - The next section of Reel to Real is the ceilidh dance part. Here is a description of the dance for those with prior knowledge of ceilidh dance moves and figures.

Formation: **Circle**

Number of dancers: **4 couples**

A1: **Circle left & right**

A2: **Reel** – a circular reel, also known as a Grand Chain

B1: **Thread the Needle** – Number 1 man leads the first time, Number 2 the second, and so on...

B2: **Arches** – Couple Number 1 lead an arch over the rest of the dancers first time, Number 2 the second, and so on...

C1 & 2: **Canon** – 4 counts into the middle & 4 counts back out for each dancer to step dance, freestyle. As one dancer comes back, the next goes forwards.

D1: **Swing**

D2: **Promenade**

Detailed explanation

The Music: The musical structure of traditional folk tunes is usually a 16 bar tune, in 2 parts of 8 bars, called the A and B part. Each part is usually played twice so the musicians and dancers will know it as 2As and 2Bs. This dance uses a 4 part tune, ABCD, each part played twice or a 32 bar tune repeated for each time through the dance.

The Dance: The dance is for a group of 4 couples or *pairs*. There are 7 *figures* to be danced to complete the dance once through. The *figures* are the movements of each section of the dance. Each time through the dance there is a different *lead pair* therefore, it is most satisfying to dance the dance at least 4 times through, giving each pair a chance at being the *lead pair*.

The Pair: To begin the dance, the dancers are side-by-side with their partner and, traditionally, the man will be on the left hand side of the pair and the woman on the right. When working in schools we often used *Salt*, for the man and *Pepper*, for the woman, thus allowing children to dance with a friend without worrying about being in a conventional boy/girl pairing – it's usually much more fun this way and they will still get the experience of dancing with others they know less well, and of the opposite gender, during the dance. It is important the dancers stay on the correct side as it will make each section flow, particularly when it comes to leading the Thread the Needle figure.

A1: Circle left & right

All hold hands in one big circle and dance 8 steps round to the left and 8 steps back to the right.

16 steps

A2: **Reel** – a circular reel, also known as a Grand Chain

Dancers turn to face their partner. Giving right hand first, pass past their own partner and, giving alternate hands to each dancer they meet, dance once around the circle and back to *place*, where each dancer began. *NB each dancer will pass their own partner half way round the circle, keep going until back in place. Salts will be dancing anti-clockwise and Peppers clockwise around the circle.*

16 steps

B1: **Thread the Needle** – Number 1 Salt leads the first time, Number 2 the second, and so on...

All hold hands in a circle, except number 1 Salt and number 4 Pepper. Number 4 pair raise the hands they are holding with each other to make an arch. Number 1 Salt leads the whole line of dancers through the arch and, clockwise, leads them back to place. *NB the rest of the dancers keeping holding hands throughout the figure. Number 4 Salt will make a turn under their own arm. Number 4 Pepper stays in place throughout.*

16 steps

B2: **Arches** – Pair Number 1 lead an arch over the rest of the dancers first time, Number 2 the second, and so on...

Number 1 Pepper lets go of the line and makes an arch, holding hands only with number 1 Salt. They dance anticlockwise with the arch passing over the heads of the dancers and back to place. *NB Salt will dance around the middle of the circle whilst Pepper dances around the outside.*

16 steps

A1 & 2: **Canon** – Number 1 Salt leads the first time, Number 2 the second, and so on...

Taking it in turns, each dancer has 4 counts to dance forwards into the middle & 4 counts back out with freestyle step dancing. As one dancer comes back, the next goes forwards. *NB it is well worth spending some time on experimenting and improvising step dancing to the music beforehand so that dancers have some idea of what they might dance.*

32 steps

B1: Swing

Dancers turn to face their partner and give a cross-hand hold, *i.e. right hand to right hand, left to left*, and dance clockwise round.

16 steps

B2: Promenade

Keeping the cross-hand hold, dancers twist so they are side-by-side with their partner and facing anticlockwise, one pair behind the other around the circle. Salt will be nearest to the middle of the circle and the Pepper on the outside, so each pair will be like the spoke of a wheel from the middle of the circle. All dance around the circle back to place.

16 steps



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