

## Did you know?

### Traditional folk-dancing



*Yes, it's that time of year again, when the bells are dusted, the sticks are polished and flowers are arranged around the straw hats – it's the Morris Dancing season in England.*

Morris Dancing is an old tradition in the United Kingdom and it is especially popular during May. The dancing is usually accompanied by music: a pipe,

drums and perhaps a fiddle or two, although some groups now prefer accordions and melodeons. The dancers themselves often hold sticks which are beaten in rhythm or handkerchiefs which are flicked in rhythm. The dancers also wear bell pads on their shins; the bells jingle in time with their stepping.

There are also songs which accompany the dancing. The songs are usually concerned with rural concerns such as ploughing, harvest and village life, or they are bawdy and vulgar!

Although Morris is a well-known British name, it would seem that the name Morris Dancing comes from the word 'Moorish' or 'morisco' (meaning 'little moors') and can be traced to its origins in Spanish and Italian folk dance. It has long been established in Great Britain: the earliest known record was in 1448.

Traditionally Morris dancing takes place outdoors – often outside an old pub, where the landlord or landlady replenishes the glasses of the thirsty dancers.

Morris Dancing is usually only danced by experts. If ordinary folk want to dance they have to go to a barn dance or a Ceilidh – a social event with Scottish or Irish folk music, singing and traditional dancing. The barn dances have wonderful names: *A Year in the Life of a Penguin*, *Balance the Star*, *Apple Tree Square* and *Silly Threesome*. The easiest circle dance that you might enjoy at a barn dance is the *Circassian Circle* and the most difficult is something called the *Scout House Reel* or the *Soldier's Joy*.

If you would like to watch some Morris Dancing, and learn how to perform a few steps, then click here:

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xdgz9n>

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## Did you know?

Why not try a Circassian Circle Dance with your class? You can watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeejZDqD1F4>

Or perhaps this German version here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6N99YpLi98>

### Teacher's notes

#### **CIRCASSIAN CIRCLE** (Level A1.1 upwards; 15+ minutes)

(Watch one of the YouTube videos above to help you understand the formation of the dance.)

- Make sure you have enough space for the dance. You can dance the Circassian circle without music – but you will need to call out the rhythm. Otherwise find a jig such as 'The Irish Washerwoman':  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_6hmqAHE1gk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6hmqAHE1gk)
- Each pair of dancers needs an 'A' and a 'B' dancer. If you have an unequal number of students you need to be prepared to step in and dance.
- \* Make a big circle. All join hands and go into the middle 4 steps in and then out 4 steps, twice.
- 'A's go into middle, clap, and come back out; 'B's do the same, turning to face partner as they come out.
- All swing with partner, ending with both partners facing to the right. (16 beats).
- Promenade 16 steps anticlockwise.
- Repeat from \*.
- Have a breather and then start the dance again!

## Did you know?

### Teacher's notes

#### The Hokey Cokey (Level A2 upwards; 15+ minutes)

*You put your left leg in...* Discover the joys of dancing and singing the Hokey Cokey.

This is an energizer and it is lots of fun. You could use it to change the pace of the lesson or at the end of a lesson. And don't worry that people think it's a children's song – in the UK lots of adults dance the Hokey Cokey for fun: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5R-6h0h3DTk>

You can watch a video with the music and words here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdZZYZipe2w>

- Copy *Hokey Cokey* (see **Worksheet**) – one for each student.
- Go through the words while students are sitting in the classroom. Demonstrate the actions.
- Find a 'dancing' space where all the students can stand in a circle and slowly go through the first verse, making your song actions clear.
- Sing the rest of the verses with actions.

## Did you know?

### Worksheet

# The Hokey Cokey

<b>Sing the song!</b>	<b>Dance to the music!</b>
You put your left arm in	(Put your left arm into the circle.)
Your left arm out	(Put your left arm behind you.)
In, out, in, out and you shake it all about	(Move your left arm in and out quickly and then shake it.)
You do the hokey cokey and you turn around	(Hands together and then you turn round.)
That's what it's all about	(Clap hands three times.)
Whoa, hokey hokey cokey Whoa, hokey hokey cokey Whoa, hokey hokey cokey	(Hold hands and move into centre of circle, three times.)
Knees bend, arms stretch: Ra! Ra! Ra!	(Follow instructions and then clap hands on each 'Ra!')
You put your right arm in	(Put your right arm into the circle.)
Your right arm out	(Put your right arm behind you.)
In, out, in, out and you shake it all about	(Move your right arm in and out quickly and then shake it.)
You do the hokey cokey and you turn around	(Hands together and then you turn round.)
That's what it's all about	(Clap hands three times.)
Whoa, hokey hokey cokey Whoa, hokey hokey cokey Whoa, hokey hokey cokey	(Hold hands and move into centre of circle, three times.)
Knees bend, arms stretch: Ra! Ra! Ra!	(Follow instructions and then clap hands on each 'Ra!')
You put your left leg in ... You put your right leg in ... You put your whole self in ...	(Follow instructions.)