



# Lesson Activities

## Mercy Hunter



### What is costume design?

Mercy Hunter designed costumes for the ballet, opera and theatre. Do the children know what a costume designer does?

Show this video clip (<https://youtu.be/e6p7CorbD5w>), which contains an interview with the costume designer of the recent Cinderella film.

Ask the children what sorts of things did the designer have to think about when creating the costumes?

### How does costume design help tell a story?

Show stills of characters (or a clip) from a film that children are familiar with. Ideally, use a film that clearly differentiates the characters by using costume, some good examples of this are:

- Oliver – show the costumes for Oliver, The Artful Dodger, Fagin, Mr Brownlow
- Matilda – Matilda, Miss Honey, Miss Trunchbull, Mr and Mrs Wormwood
- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory – Charlie, Grandpa Joe, Willy Wonka, Veruca Salt, Mike Teevee

Ask children how do costume designers help to tell us about the personality and backgrounds of the characters? How do they show if the character is rich or poor? How do they show if the character is kind or mean? Ask them to think about the colours, the types of materials and textures that are used in the costumes.

### Textiles for Costumes

Bring in a range of textiles for this activity with a variety of qualities, soft/hard, stiff/stretchy, heavy/light. Distribute the textiles amongst the children.

Show children a clip of a ballet (select a clip where the dancers are jumping, spinning or moving as much as possible). Ask children to describe the costumes that they see in the video clip. What were the materials like that were used in the ballet? What sorts of qualities did the materials have – were they floaty, stretchy, light?



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Ask the children to pass around the samples of textiles that you have brought in and select the materials they think would be the most and least suitable for a ballet costume. Ask them to explain their answers.

## Costume Design Project

In this activity, students will design and create a costume for a fictional character. If you are studying an appropriate book, you could use characters from the book for the costume design activity. Alternatively you can use the characters in Resource 1.

Divide the class into groups of four. Explain to children that they are going to design and create a costume for a fictional character.

Give each group a character. Give children 10 – 15 minutes to discuss their character. Ask them to make a note of the sorts of colours and materials they might use to convey information about the character.

Allow each group to choose a selection of the textiles and old clothes. They will use this to make their costume. In their groups, they discuss how they will use the materials to create their costume. Encourage them to sketch their ideas for the costume. They can use one of the group members to model the costumes.

Remind children that they can use the fabric paints and markers to add detail to their costumes. Show children how they can fray or unravel fabrics to make them seem older or ripped.

The costume creation could take 1 – 2 hours. If you are doing the activity in a couple of different sessions, you can encourage children to bring in extra materials from home to help with their designs.

When the costumes have been created, ask each group to come up to present their costume. Ask them to describe the character their group was assigned. Then explain how their costume design gives you information about the character.



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## What's Next?

