

## **Ballerina Dreams**

**Author:** Michaela DePrince **Illustrator:** Frank Morrison

**Genre:** Biography

**Summary:** This story shares an inspiring true story of Michaela DePrince. A talented young girl who followed her dreams and became a ballerina.

### **Standards Alignment:**

1. Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.
2. Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text.

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### **Before Reading**

What does a ballerina do? What's the difference between ballet and ballerina?  
What is an orphan? What do you think Michaela's dreams are?

Identify the continent Africa on a map. Locate the country Sierra Leone, and discuss the vegetation, animals, and climate.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfh2AtBhZDM>

Watch this video about Michaela to preview her life

### **During Reading**

Why was Michaela sad when she lived at the orphanage? Why did Michaela desire to become a ballerina? What happened to her best friend Mia? Why was it important for Michaela to be in the Nutcracker? Why was it important to create the document First Position? What advice does Michaela give?

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### **After Reading**

What were important events that happened in Michaela's life? What does orphanage mean? What are the differences of port de bras, tendu, and plie?

# Get Creative

## COMPARE

Make a T-Chart table of the ballet dance to another dance. Examples to compare: types of clothes, music, stances, places of performance

## SOCIAL STUDIES

Make a timeline of Michaela's life.

## HISTORY

Research the history of ballet and write down at least 10 facts in a summary.

## ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY

What is in a ballet slipper? Discover how a shoe is made and create, illustrate, label your own.

## WRITING

Write a letter to the author. Find more of her information on <http://www.michaeladeprince.com/>.

## WEATHER

Make a weather map of Sierra Leone and make a weather map of community. Compare your maps.

## More books about other ballerinas

*Firebird* by Misty Copeland

*Dancing in the Wings* by Debbie Allen

*Sugar Plum Ballerinas #1: Plum Fantastic* by Whoopi Goldberg

*A Dance Like Starlight: One Ballerina's Dream* by Kristy Dempsey

*Ballerina Swan* by Allegra Kent

*Swan: The Life and Dance of Anna Pavlova* by Laurel Snyder

# Vocabulary

Print off the vocabulary cards and make a matching game.

**ballerina**

**ballet**

**audience**

**Africa**

**vitiligo**

**professional**

**Sierra  
Leone**

**barre**

**combination**

**orphanage**

**port de  
bras**

**tendu**

**plie**

**jete**

# Quiz

## Understanding the Story

Circle one letter that best answers each question.

1. This story is about
  - a. The story of a girl who dreamed of owning a dance studio.
  - b. A girl who followed her dreams and became a ballerina.
  - c. A young girl who learned the importance of being unique inside and out.
  - d. A family of trained ballerinas.
  
2. What does the story describe about Michaela's life? (Circle all that apply)
  - a. she was a lonely girl
  - b. she was a girl who had many friends and family while she lived in Sierra Leone
  - c. she was a girl who danced in The Nutcracker
  - d. she was a girl who did not give up on her dreams
  
3. Africa is a \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. continent
  - b. country
  - c. city
  - d. town
  
4. How did Michaela describe her new mother's hair?
  - a. hair the color of roses
  - b. hair like lilacs
  - c. hair that smelled like flowers
  - d. hair the color of daises
  
5. Why did someone ask Michaela to be featured in a documentary?
  - a. So the film could feature ballerinas across the world.
  - b. So the film could show that there are black ballerinas
  - c. So the film could feature ballerinas from America.
  - d. So the film could feature ballerinas who could do better combinations
  
6. A combination is \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. when Michaela found dances that were similar
  - b. when Michaela practiced with her friends
  - c. when Michaela learned one dance step

# Using New Vocabulary

orphanage   barre   port de bras   Africa

ballet   Sierra Leone   ballerina

I grew up in

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_. My country had rain forests and a hot climate.

Sometimes I would miss my family and parents at the

\_\_\_\_\_ and cry alone. At school I saw a picture of a

\_\_\_\_\_. This dancer looked so pretty in her fluffy dress

that had a circle around it. This dancer looked so happy. That is when I decided that

I wanted to be in a \_\_\_\_\_. Papa Andrew took on a

long walk so we could meet our new families. I was scared, but I met a wonderful

woman with beautiful hair. She was my new mother. At my new home I took my first

ballet lessons. On my first class I lined up and held the \_\_\_\_\_.

Then I pointed my arms out which was the \_\_\_\_\_.

I had so much fun, and I am so happy that I followed my dreams.