
rnzb
ROYAL NEW ZEALAND BALLET

COPPÉLIA

EDUCATION RESOURCE



rnzb.org.nz • facebook.com/nzballet

1 CURRICULUM

In this unit you and your students will:

- Learn about the elements that come together to create a theatrical ballet experience.
- Identify the processes involved in making a theatre production happen.
- Learn about the elements of the *Coppélia* story and the development of the RNZB's version.

Curriculum links in this unit

Values

Students will be encouraged to value:

- **Innovation**, inquiry and curiosity, by thinking critically, creatively and reflectively.
- **Diversity**, as found in our different cultures and heritages.
- **Community and participation** for the common good.

Key competencies

- **Using language, symbols and text** – Students will recognise how choices of language and symbols in live theatre affect people's understanding and the ways in which they respond.
- **Relating to others** – Students will develop the ability to listen actively and share ideas regarding theatrical ballet performances.
- **Participating and contributing** – students will be actively involved in their cultural community, understanding the importance of creative environments.
- **Thinking** – Students will reflect on their own thinking and learning after the personal experience of attending a live theatre show.

Workshop achievement objectives

The Arts Level 3 & 4 Dance

- **Developing practical knowledge** – Students will apply the dance elements from the RNZB's *Coppélia* to extend personal movement skills and vocabularies and to explore the vocabularies of others.
- **Developing ideas** – Students will combine and contrast the dance elements to express images, ideas and feelings from *Coppélia* using variety of choreographic processes.
- **Communicating and interpreting** – Describe how the purpose of dance is expressed through movement.
- **Understanding the Arts in context** – students will explore and describe how dance is used for different purposes in a variety of contexts.



THE STORY OF COPPÉLIA

Act I

This ballet is set in a village in central Europe on the eve of its harvest festival.

Swanilda, the heroine of the story, is engaged to Franz, a handsome young villager. The day before their wedding she catches him flirting with a beautiful girl sitting on the balcony of a nearby house. The owner of the house is a strange and sinister toymaker called Dr Coppélius. The mystery girl ignores an invitation to come down to the square, much to Swanilda's annoyance.

Later, Swanilda's father suggests the Franz and his daughter put their love to the test using an ear of corn. Tradition says that if it rattles they will be married. The corn remains silent. After shedding a few tears, Swanilda is back dancing with her friends and by evening she has reconciled with Franz.

Dr Coppélius is pushed around by some rowdy lads on the way to the inn. He continues on, unaware he has dropped his key. Swanilda finds it and, together with her friends, enters the toymaker's house to have it out with her rival. Meanwhile Franz has also decided to get to know the lovely girl on the balcony, and prepares to enter the house.

Act II

Swanilda and her friends search Dr Coppélius's workshop for the aloof stranger. When they discover Coppélia they realise that she is only a doll and that the whole house is filled with mechanical toys. Dr Coppélius bursts in and drives them all out, except for Swanilda who hides in an alcove.

Franz then climbs in through the window, but is soon captured by Dr Coppélius, who drugs him. Franz falls asleep and Dr Coppélius uses magical spells to transfer his life force to the doll. Not realising that Swanilda has switched places with his beloved Coppélia, the old man is overjoyed when the doll begins to move. His excitement is short-lived: Franz comes to and Swanilda reveals her true identity. The couple kiss and make up and leave Dr Coppélius disillusioned and alone.

Act III

The village gathers for a double celebration of the harvest festival and Swanilda and Franz's wedding feast. Dr Coppélius interrupts the proceedings threatening revenge. Swanilda's father pacifies him with a purse of gold and the festivities continue long into the night.



THE BACKGROUND OF COPPÉLIA

Arthur Saint-Léon is the original choreographer of *Coppélia*'s. Born in Paris in 1821, he grew up in Stuttgart, where his father was dance master at the court. He studied both ballet and violin, for which his teacher was none other than Niccolò Paganini. As a dancer, he performed throughout Europe, eventually succeeding Jules Perrot (the original choreographer of *Giselle*) at the Imperial Ballet in St Petersburg in 1859. He remained there for a decade, and his eventual successor was Marius Petipa – whose own version of *Coppélia*, after Saint-Léon, is the one on which most modern productions are based. Saint-Léon created many ballets, together with an early form of ballet notation, but only *Coppélia* survives with any vestiges of his original choreography. He died in Paris, two days after the first season of *Coppélia* had ended.

***Coppélia* and the Royal New Zealand Ballet**

The Royal New Zealand Ballet at 60, published in 2013, includes an indispensable appendix which lists all the productions that have been performed by the company since the founding of Poul Gnatt's New Zealand Ballet.

Beginning with Gnatt's own staging in 1955, *Coppélia* – whether the full three act ballet, or sizeable excerpts – has appeared in the RNZB's repertoire a total of eleven times: a testament to the work's lasting appeal.

Poul Gnatt's first production featured choreography by Harald Lander, with designs borrowed from Gnatt's Danish homeland. Nine years later, and the choreography for Russell Kerr's staging credited Arthur Saint-Léon's original, with new designs by Raymond Boyce. A young Jon Trimmer alternated in the roles of Dr Coppélius and Franz. Fast forward through the next fifty years, and almost every RNZB Artistic Director since has staged this much-loved work. The designs for this production, originally made for The Australian Ballet in 1979, and last seen in New Zealand 2004 in a staging by Gary Harris and Sherilyn Kennedy, were created by the late Kristian Fredrikson, one of New Zealand's most distinguished theatrical artists. The costumes are without a doubt spectacular, and could certainly not have been conceived of in the RNZB's early years. And yet, in this new staging by Martin Vedel, we have come full circle – *Coppélia* is again seen through Danish eyes, as it was in 1955.



COPPÉLIA ON STAGE

To watch a fast forward behind the scenes video of the RNZB unpacking the massive *Coppélia* set go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KE74t8hwTE&feature=youtu.be

Or visit: www.youtube.com/nzballet

Here are some beautiful images from our 2004 season.



We have also taken some sneaky photos of some props to share with you.

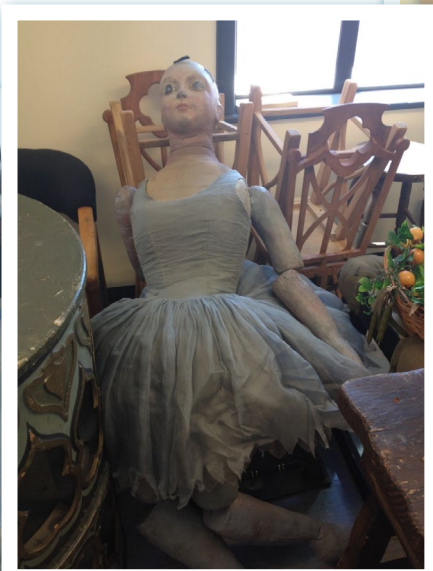
Here is a table full of small props. (You can see Ballet Master Martin Vedel in the background busy in rehearsal.)



One of Doctor Coppélius's dolls from his workshop

And a rocking horse... with an extra leg!

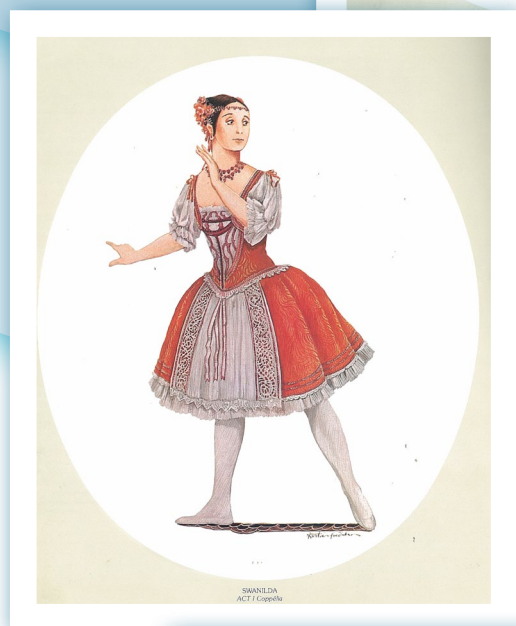
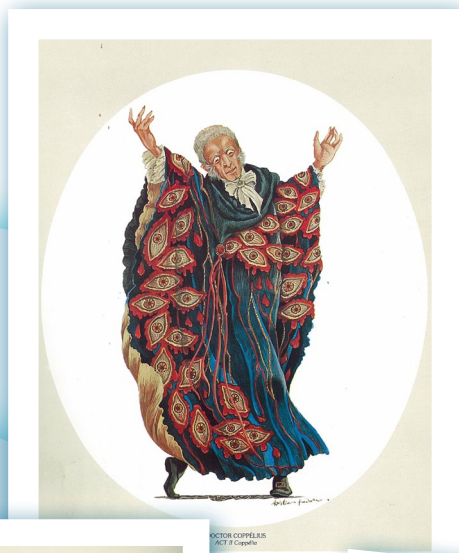
Here is Coppélia's chair



COPPÉLIA COSTUMES

The costumes for this season of *Coppélia* were designed by Kristian Fredrikson. He has designed the costumes for the Royal New Zealand Ballet many times. You may recall his beautiful costumes for RNZB's recent season of *Swan Lake*.

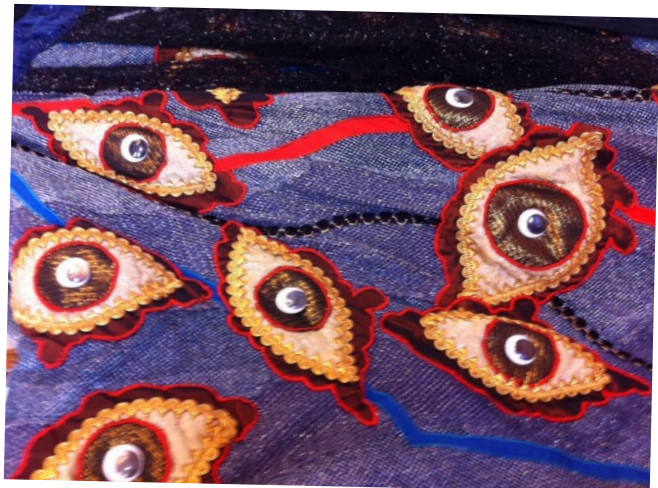
Here are some of his designs for *Coppélia*. He designed them for the Australian ballet, from whom we are borrowing the production.



COSTUME PHOTOS

Here are some photos of the costumes when they were delivered to the RNZB Wardrobe department.

Can you see similarities between Kristian Fredrikson design drawings and the actual costumes?



MY FAVOURITE TOY

We all have our favourite toy. Can you remember when you first received your favourite toy?
Was it a gift? Was it new or old?

Name of Toy

My favourite toy is:

.....
.....

Description

Physical:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Does your toy have a 'personality'? What is it?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What is your favourite thing to do with your toy?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Draw your toy:



WHAT TOY ARE YOU?

Swanilda pretends to be the doll, Coppélia and tricks Doctor Coppélius so well that he really thinks his doll has come to life!

If you could be turned into any toy what would it be and why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Think about:

- How would you move?
- Where would your brain/head/face be?
- What would your special “trick” be?
- What would you eat?

Write a day in the life of you as this toy here.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

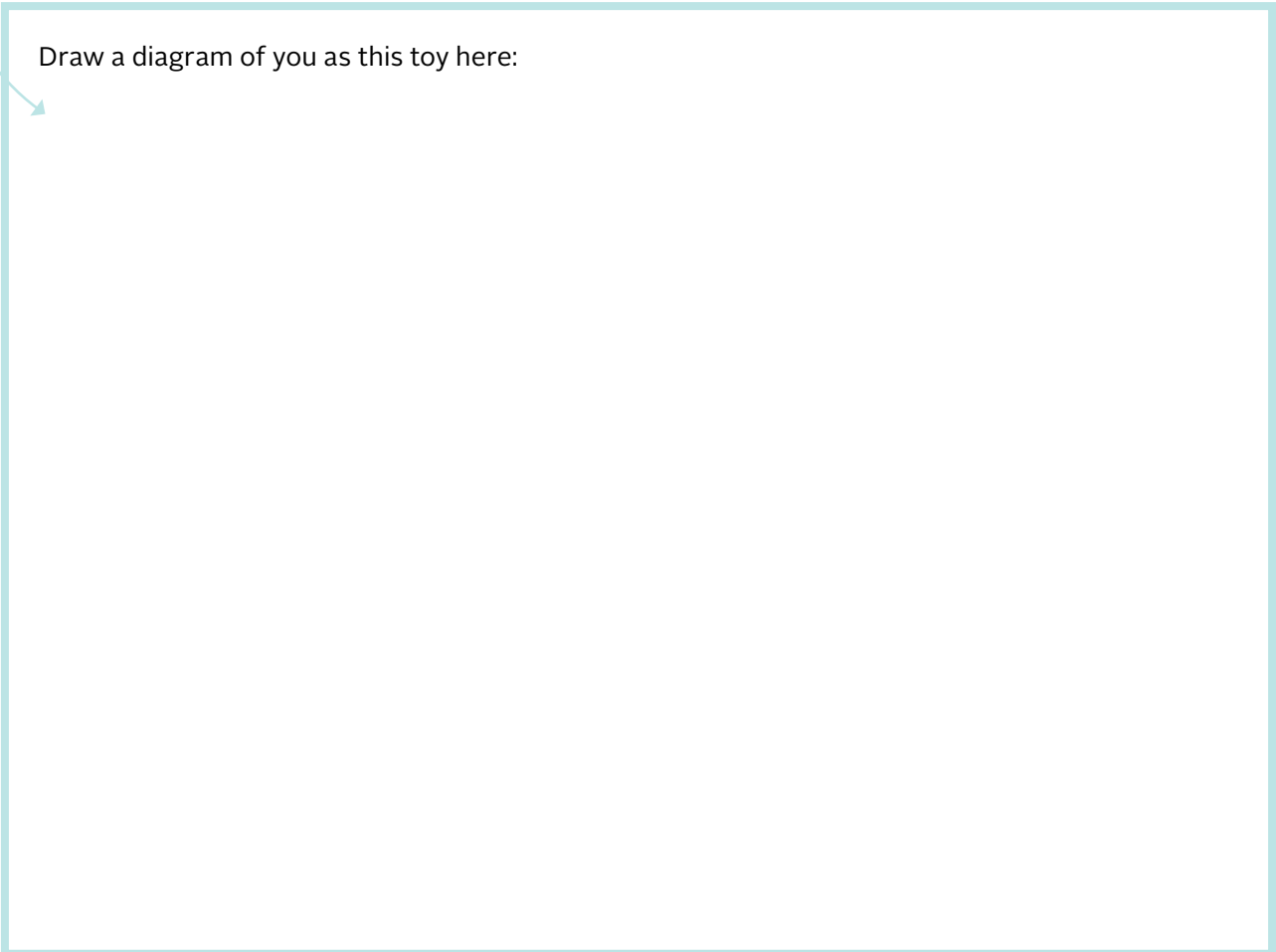
.....

.....

.....

.....

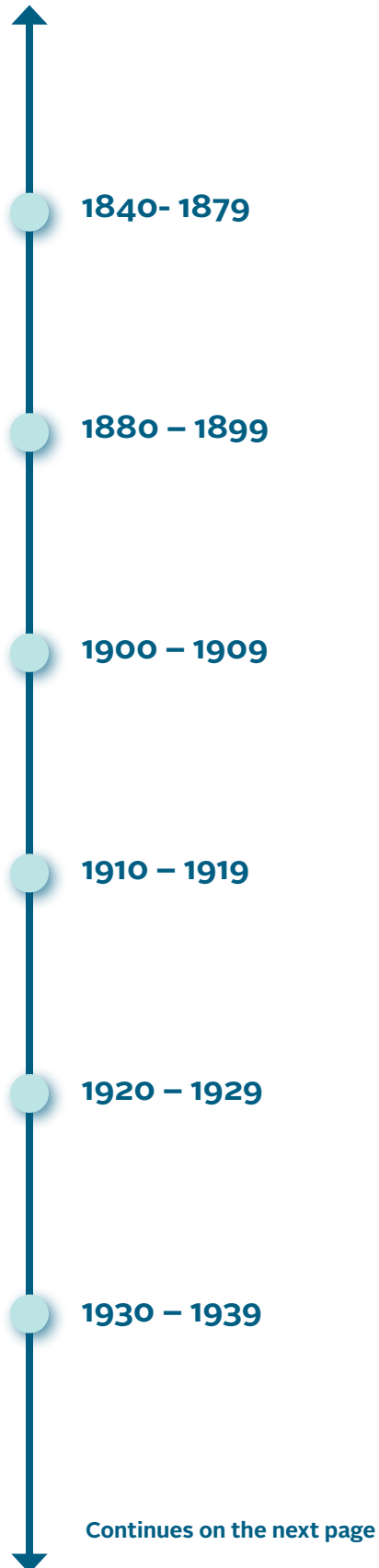
Draw a diagram of you as this toy here:

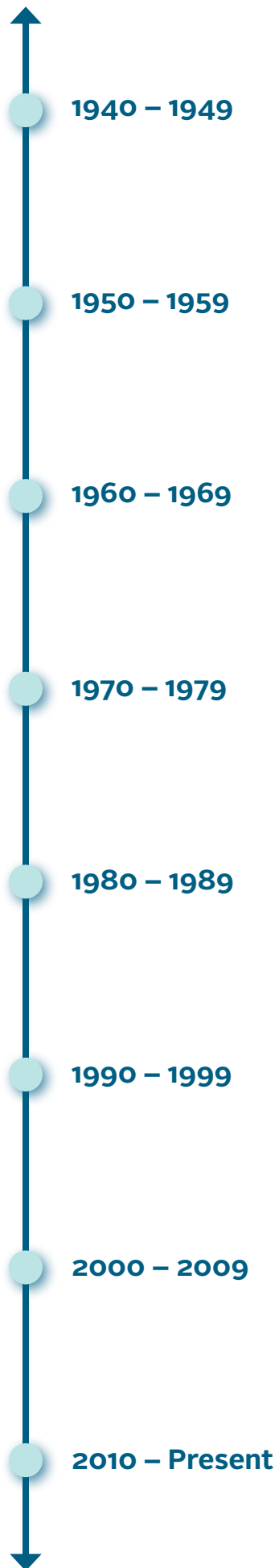


TIME FOR TOYS

Use the dates below and the images following to create a time line of when some well known toys were created.

www.toyinfo.org will help (Toys and trends).





TIME LINE TOYS



WORLD FAMOUS... AND LOVED

On the next few pages are some images of some classic toys. Use your research skills to find out the information for each of them.



Name of toy:

What is it made of?

When was it invented or made popular?

How do children play with this toy?

What adult skills does this toy help a child to practice?

What do you think would be fun about this toy?

How could you make this toy more modern?



Name of toy:

What is it made of?

When was it invented or made popular?

How do children play with this toy?

What adult skills does this toy help a child to practice?

What do you think would be fun about this toy?

How could you make this toy more modern?



Name of toy:

.....

What is it made of?

.....
.....

When was it invented or made popular?

.....
.....

How do children play with this toy?

.....
.....
.....

What adult skills does this toy help a child to practice?

.....
.....
.....

What do you think would be fun about this toy?

.....
.....
.....

How could you make this toy more modern?

.....
.....
.....



Name of toy:

What is it made of?

When was it invented or made popular?

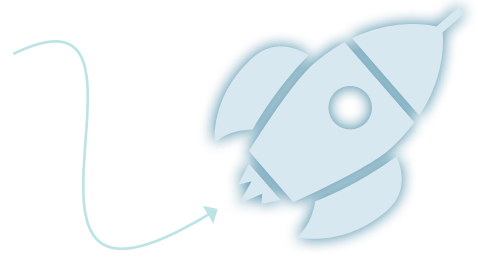
How do children play with this toy?

What adult skills does this toy help a child to practice?

What do you think would be fun about this toy?

How could you make this toy more modern?

INVENT YOUR OWN TOY



In pairs look at your favourite toys, one at a time.

What do you like about it?

What makes your toy special?

Would it be better in a different material? Size? Colour?

Why do you think the inventors made it this way?

How could you improve it?

YOUR TOY

Using one of your toys, or a brand new idea, invent a toy. Think about how you could improve a toy or how a new toy could be very special. For example a favourite doll could also be an alarm to wake you up in the morning, or have a special compartment for secrets. Or your favourite Match Box Car could have a built in camera so you can see into small spaces. Or your favourite teddy could unroll into a sleeping bag... get creative!

Name:

.....
.....

Purpose (what skill does it help children practice):

.....
.....
.....

Material (what is it made of):

.....
.....

Size:

.....
.....

Colour:

.....
.....

Motion (does it move? in what way?) :

.....
.....
.....

Special extra abilities (What makes your toy a Best Seller?) :

.....
.....
.....

Draw your toy on the next page...

Draw your design here (add notes and arrows to explain each part):

DANCE LIKE COPPÉLIA

Swanilda has to dance like a doll to persuade Doctor Coppélius she is a true doll.

Take a look at this image of Lucy Green being the doll Coppélia



How has Lucy positioned her arms and legs to look like a doll? Can you see how she has made all of her limbs and neck stiff almost like a robot?

There are two styles of dance that are similar to how Lucy is dancing. One is called Dance of Puppeting and the other, better known is The Robot.

You can find lots of examples on You Tube of both of these styles of dance. The great thing is you do not need to be a dancer from the RNZB to perform them and they are lots of fun!

To dance like a doll or a robot requires good control of your body. The movements are often started with a jolt, as if your motor has just started. Slow motions of arms and legs add to the impression that you are bolted together and a blank stare on your face adds to the illusion!

Here are some useful websites to get you going:

www.wikihow.com/Do-the-Robot

www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMyxcRqmano

www.howcast.com/videos/487717-How-to-Dance-the-Robot-Club-Dancing

CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION



Imagine Doctor Coppélius had called the police as soon as he realised his home had been broken into. Both Franz and Swanilda are in the house but are hidden.

You are the first detective on the scene. You need to work out what has happened.

Doctor Coppélius tells you that when he arrived home he found his door wide open even though he is certain he locked it on the way out.

You need to look around the home and spot any other things out of place. What are some small signs you might see that might lead you to discover Franz and Swanilda hidden in the room? For example, you might spot some dirt on one of the dolls shoes. Or a hair ribbon may be out of place from the girls playing with them.

Taking finger prints

Taking finger prints in a crime scene is common practice; it lets the police know who has been there. Then they can work out who shouldn't have been there. The amazing thing about our finger prints is that we all have our own- no one has the same as you!

Become aware of your and your class mates finger prints and the difference between them.

Make fingerprints using a thick, soft pencil. Scribble a thick layer of pencil onto a piece of paper by going over and over the same spot. Then rub your finger into the pencil 'pad' so your finger is black. Now press your finger onto one of the boxes below. Do this for you and five of your class mates. Can you see differences?

Finger print:

A large, empty square box with a light blue border, intended for a fingerprint.

Name:

.....

Finger print:

A large, empty square box with a light blue border, intended for a fingerprint.

Name:

.....

Finger print:

A large, empty square box with a light blue border, intended for a fingerprint.

Name:

.....

Finger print:

A large, empty square box with a light blue border, intended for a fingerprint.

Name:

.....

Finger print:

A large, empty square box with a light blue border, intended for a fingerprint.

Name:

.....

Finger print:

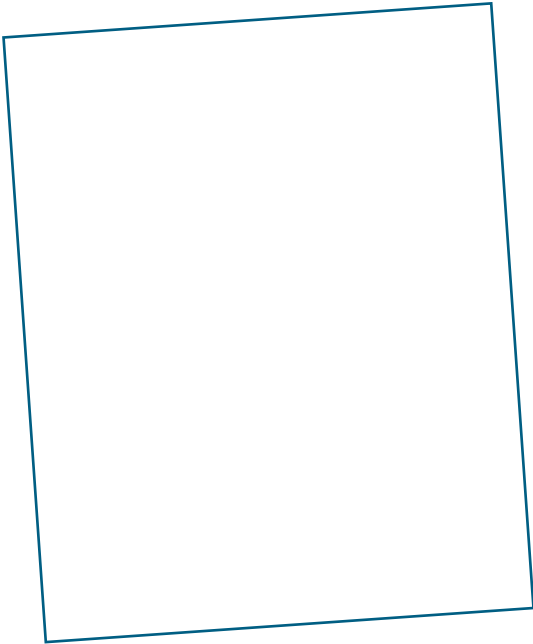
A large, empty square box with a light blue border, intended for a fingerprint.

Name:

.....

Write a newspaper report about the break in of Doctor Coppélius's house and how a brilliant detective (that would be you) solve it! Did Franz and Swanilda get into trouble?

THE DAILY NEWS



Handwriting practice lines consisting of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line. There are 10 such lines in this section.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line. There are 15 such lines in this section.