

# Unit 14 Salt, pepper, vinegar, mustard

## Exploring singing games

### ABOUT THE UNIT

This unit develops children's ability to recognise and explore some characteristics of singing games. It consolidates their sense of pulse and ability to perform with others.

In this unit children sing and play a selection of traditional and contemporary singing games. They look at their characteristics, eg *structure, tempo, rhythm, tunes, words, actions*. They think about the origins and uses of singing games.

### WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit links to the ongoing skills unit (unit 8) by reinforcing and extending understanding of how different types of music can have particular characteristics, eg *a strong emphasis on pulse and repetition*. This unit develops skills learned in units 3, 4 and 10. In unit 10 children created music as a class. In this unit the aim is to enable children to make up their own singing games in groups.

It also builds on units 11 and 12 and has a direct link to dance/movement.

This unit has strong links with literacy. It could also link to history in the selection and comparison of singing games from different times. The development of a class singing game will help develop class identity and unity and this unit has a direct link to PSHE.

### PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children and teachers have:

- sung and played a range of playground games
- clapped/tapped the pulse of songs and jingles
- practised clapping the rhythms of words, phrases and short jingles
- made up melodies for short jingles and poems
- developed skills through the activities described in units 3, 4 and 10

### VOCABULARY

In this unit children will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:

- tempo, eg *fast, slow, pulse*
- rhythm, eg *word rhythm, singing games, syllables, rhythmic patterns/ostinati/melody/tune*
- pitch, eg *pentatonic scale*
- structure, eg *verse, chorus, beginning, end, repetition*
- processes, eg *how singing games may have been created and passed on*
- context, eg *the reason why singing games have evolved*

### RESOURCES

#### Stimulus:

- children or adults, who can demonstrate traditional and contemporary singing games

#### Sound sources:

- a collection of tuned and untuned percussion instruments

### EXPECTATIONS

#### at the end of this unit

*most children will:*

sing and play a range of singing games; describe their musical characteristics; make up a singing game with words, actions and a strong sense of pulse, and teach it to other children

*some children will not have made so much progress and will:*

sing and play a range of singing games and songs; describe some of their characteristics; with help, make up a singing game with words and actions, and perform it to other children

*some children will have progressed further and will:*

analyse and describe the musical characteristics of popular singing games; make up a singing game with words, actions and a strong sense of pulse and melody, and accompany it with tuned and untuned percussion

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

## POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

### INTRODUCTION: WHICH SINGING GAMES DO WE LIKE AND WHY?

- to sing and play a range of singing games
- Ask the children to demonstrate singing games that incorporate singing and some kind of action to each other. *What is the function of each game? Is it a clapping, skipping, dancing, two-ball, counting out/choosing game, etc?*
- Teach the children some new singing games – one in each category, eg *clapping, skipping, dancing, two-ball, counting, choosing*.

- sing and play a range of singing games with confidence
- identify different actions and uses of singing games

- The class could explore a clapping song, eg *A sailor went to sea*, a skipping singing game, eg *High, low, medium, slow*, a dancing game, eg *Bluebird*, a singing game, eg *Oliver Twist*, a counting rhyme, a choosing singing game. They could explore other singing games, eg *Hokey cokey*.

### EXPLORATION: WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SINGING GAMES?

- that singing games have specific musical and other characteristics that contribute to their success
- Make a list of singing games under the different categories.
- Ask the class: *Why do we like singing games? How do we learn them? Does anyone else in the family know them? How did they originate? How is each of the examples suitable for the way it is used?* Encourage the class to consider the sound (including rhyme), meaning, repetition and rhythm of the words, the tempo, melody, length, number of people involved, actions and resources.
- Sing a few singing games and note their characteristics eg *catchy tunes, repetition, predictable, repeated melodic phrases sung at different pitches (same tune but sung a bit higher/lower – as in 'Poor Mary sits a-weeping, a-weeping, a-weeping')*.
- Look at a few skipping games and see if they could be used for clapping. *Could you skip to a counting song? Would a two-ball singing game make a good dancing game? Could you skip to Poor Mary sits a weeping?*

- identify different singing games
- relate how the sounds are used to the different types of singing game

- All clapping and skipping singing games/songs have a strong pulse and catchy rhythm. Some of them, eg *Salt, pepper, vinegar, mustard* are intended to go faster and faster. Dancing games often incorporate walking or skipping in a circle and choosing children to join one or more people in the middle, eg *The farmer's in his den*. They can involve miming to the words of the songs, eg *Mulberry bush*, *Deep in the forest*. The words of singing games that accompany the playing of two-ball sometimes suggest specific actions, eg *bouncing the ball on the ground or throwing over arm in* *When I was one*. Counting out/choosing games usually finish with spelling out the word O-U-T, eg *One potato, two potato*.

- to clap/tap the pulse and how to create rhythmic ostinati
- Choose a clapping/skipping game with a strong pulse and ask two or three of the children to create actions (claps and skips) to the singing games. Ask the rest of the children to clap/tap along with them. Try again but at a faster tempo. Can all the clappers/skippers keep up? Try at a slower speed. How does the tempo affect the children making the actions? The children should understand that the tempo or speed of singing games is adapted to match the nature of the actions (different types of skips/claps/throws), and the skills of the players.
- Clap the rhythm of a well-known singing game, that is, clap for each syllable of each word. Ask the children to try again but without speaking the words out loud – they should say the words in their heads. If relevant, draw the attention of the children to the prominence of 'skipping' rhythms, eg *One potato, two potato*. Skipping rhythms are often used in playground singing games. Ask a child to accompany the singing game and clapping rhythms by playing the pulse on an untuned percussion instrument.
- Invite a child to choose one line of the singing game and clap its rhythm over and over again (rhythmic ostinato), while a small group of children quietly sing through the whole thing. Ask the rest of the children to try to spot the line on which the ostinato is based. Try again with other children and other singing games.

- accompany singing games with confidence by clapping/tapping the pulse in time, getting faster and slower
- demonstrate the difference between pulse and rhythm
- create simple rhythmic ostinati and perform with others

- Extension activity:** Take another well-known singing game and ask three children to accompany it: one to play the pulse, another the rhythm, and the third a rhythmic ostinato based on one line. Listen to the accompaniment first with, then without the singing.
- Skipping rhythms are created by using a longer note followed by a shorter note that match the rhythm of skipping, which has a long hop followed by a short hop. Many nursery rhymes have a skipping rhythm – perhaps they were sung as children skipped.

### BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: CAN WE MAKE UP OUR OWN PLAYGROUND SINGING GAMES AND SONGS?

- how to make up tunes for their own singing games and add appropriate actions
- Ask the children, in twos or threes, to make up a short (four-line) singing game. This could be a skipping, clapping or two-ball singing game. Remind them that they can use nonsense words, repetition, rhyme, and that the singing game should have a strong pulse and a catchy rhythm. It could have a topical theme. Give the children opportunities to perform the actions (skipping, clapping) as they sing.
- Ask the children to teach others their singing games.
- Let the class hear and watch all the different ideas and select a class singing game that they all learn together.

- make up their own singing games with tunes and actions
- perform their singing games for other people

- Children who find it difficult to make up a singing game could use/adapt an existing jingle and make up actions for it.
- Extension activity:** Ask the children to play their tunes on pitched percussion instruments, giving them the first few notes, if necessary. You may wish to limit the notes available to the children to the five notes of a pentatonic scale. *Can you write the note names above the words of the singing game?* Add a simple percussion accompaniment incorporating the playing of a pulse and either the rhythm or a rhythmic ostinato.
- The development of the class singing game will help develop a sense of class identity and unity. When the children move on to the next year they could revisit the selection and choose a new class game if the class contains different pupils.

## EXTENSION AND FUTURE LEARNING

In addition to the examples given in the 'Points to note' section, children could go on to:

- make up a circle dance with words and action, eg *Here we go round the mulberry bush*
- make a study of playground games by interviewing adults of all ages. *What games did you play? Were they played by both boys and girls? Which were your favourite games?*
- make a video of the children playing their own games

If this unit is repeated, the focus on a musical genre can stay the same, but the content and the expectations should change. The content could be another genre such as the music for computer games, a dance style or lullabies. Expectations should be raised by expecting more children to achieve the 'most children' and 'some children will have progressed further' statements and by placing emphasis on the type of activity described in the extension activities included in the 'Points to note' section.

## ENRICHMENT

- Children could visit senior citizens and learn some of the playground games they used to play, and teach them their new ones.
- The local press could be invited into school to take photos and write a report of the new playground games.

