

Unit 21 Who knows?

Exploring musical processes

ABOUT THE UNIT

This unit provides an opportunity for children to develop and demonstrate the musical skills, knowledge and understanding achieved in years 5 and 6.

During the unit children will develop an understanding of the process of composing by creating and performing music in response to musical and non-musical stimuli.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on all units designed for key stages 1 and 2. It gives an indication of the level of attainment of pupils in the class. Primary teachers can use the unit at the end of key stage 2 to prepare for music in key stage 3. This unit is repeated as the first unit in the key stage 3 schemes of work.

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children and teachers have:

- performed rhythmically and with control of pitch
- used sounds descriptively in response to different stimuli
- listened to and performed a wide range of music
- used notations
- developed skills through the activities described in all previous units

VOCABULARY

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

- sounds, *eg pitch, getting higher/lower, duration, longer/shorter, pulse, rhythm, metre, tempo, timbre, texture*
- processes, *eg use of notations, composing, arranging, improvising, performing*
- context, *eg intentions, purpose, venue, occasion*

RESOURCES

Stimulus:

- words
- images
- musical material

Sound sources:

- range of instruments – acoustic, electronic, tuned and untuned

EXPECTATIONS

at the end of this unit

most children will:

create music which reflects given intentions and uses notations as a support for creative work and performance; improvise and maintain their own part with awareness of the whole ensemble; describe and compare different kinds of music using musical vocabulary

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

create and perform music which meets intentions and combines sounds with *some* awareness of the combined effect; recognise how musical elements are combined and used expressively

some children will have progressed further and will:

take the lead in creating and performing and provide suggestion for others; make connections between the different stimuli provided; use a variety of musical devices including melody, rhythms, chords and structures

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION: HOW DO COMPOSERS BEGIN TO COMPOSE?

- how music is composed from a variety of different stimuli
- Introduce the challenge: In this unit children will compose music using a range of different sounds and musical ideas in response to a problem set by a composer's notebook.
- Play music that was inspired by different stimuli, eg *the countryside, a commission, a personal experience, a musical 'germ' idea*. Discuss why and how the music was composed. Add information about the background, eg *the society, time and venue*.

- identify different starting points for composing music

- Emphasise that composers take inspiration from a wide range of different ideas, both musical and non-musical. The stimulus for musical material could be a mood or a musical idea. This is a real task reflecting the way many composers work.

EXPLORATION: WHAT DIFFERENT STARTING POINTS CAN BE USED TO STIMULATE COMPOSITION?

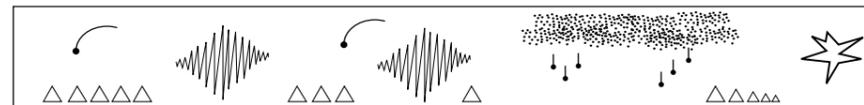
- how sounds can be used descriptively
- Images as a starting point: As a class, explore the use of voice sounds to create different images, eg *windswept hills, eerie space, humming machines/computers*.
- Ask individual children to suggest other images and demonstrate how voices could be used.
- Try using instruments. Ask individual children to suggest instruments and how they could be played to describe the images suggested so far.

- use their voices confidently and descriptively in response to given images
- choose instruments and control a range of sounds

- Identify children who are able to provide suggestions and comment on how the sounds could be improved. Give these children an opportunity to make further suggestions.
- Display instruments so that children can point to an instrument if they have not met it before.

- how sounds can be described using symbols

- Using a simple score, made up of symbols invented by the children, ask the class to suggest instruments which could play each shape.



Either give each class member an instrument or divide the class into four groups. Let each group perform in turn. Discuss how the performance matched or did not match the symbols. Remember that the voice can be used as an instrument.

- perform using notation as a support

- Encourage the class to analyse the extent to which the performance matched the symbols. Use a variety of symbols. Note those children who identify the small details, eg *when one sound stops as the other starts*.
- Note those children who recognise how the overlapping sounds should be played.

- about pulse, metre and rhythm

- Rhythmic ideas as a starting point: Set a steady pulse and ask the class to join in clapping on each pulse. Ask the class how they could show that the pulse was grouped into a pattern of four beats. Ask the class to clap, tap, tap, tap to a four beat pattern. See if they can change it to a three beat pattern, and then two, and five.
- Add a rhythmic pattern over the pulse pattern. Ask the class to describe what you have done. Invite individual children to provide their own rhythm pattern while the class maintains a steady pulse.

- improvise rhythmic patterns to a steady pulse with awareness of the metre

- Look for the response which demonstrates an understanding of metre, eg *stronger and weaker beats*.
- **Extension activity:** Give the class a notated rhythm pattern and help them to play it together. Develop different parts and identify children to lead each part. Give each leader a non-tuned instrument, eg



- how pitched notes can be organised into a melodic phrase

- Melodic ideas as a starting point: Invite individual children to add a melodic pattern to any of the rhythmic patterns and ask the class to sing back the melodic phrase. Involve as many children as possible.

- create melodic patterns using given notes and rhythm

- By selecting a number of pitched notes as the starting point for this activity, eg *C D E G A*, more children will be encouraged to have a go.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: COMPOSING MUSIC TO A GIVEN BRIEF

- to use different starting points to create a composition
 - Draw together the activities by reminding the class how music can be created from many different starting points. Ask who can remember the starting points used so far. Ask for other ideas which could have been used.
 - Set the challenge: Give each child the same brief. Let them create the composition individually or in pairs.
 - Before they begin to compose give more information about the context. For example, the ideas jotted down were prepared for a commission to write music for the opening of a television programme. Give details about the programme including the channel, the time it was broadcast, *eg morning, afternoon, early evening, late evening*.
 - Possible brief: Compose 30 to 60 seconds of music to introduce a new programme called *Who knows*. The music should create an atmosphere of mystery and suspense. Tension should build until about two-thirds of the way through the piece, after which it should relax. Either keep to a slow, steady tempo, or make the music get faster towards the middle and then slow down again towards the end. Either use ♩ ♪ ♫ throughout or change and develop the rhythm. Use D E F A B for the melody and note clusters (chords). Start with one eerie, strange sound and then add further layers. Use voice sounds. The piece should capture the interest of listeners and make them want to watch the programme to find out what it is about.
- compose music individually or in pairs using a range of stimuli and developing their musical ideas into a completed composition
 - Many of the activities so far will have given a clear indication of the level of attainment in the class. Some children will demonstrate their attainment through this final activity. It allows them to work on their own and reflect on the lessons.
 - The stimulus sheet could include: rhythmic notation; melodic ideas such as a note pattern; words to describe a mood; indications about tempo, dynamics, texture, structure.

EXTENSION AND FUTURE LEARNING

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

- use other starting points for compositions, *eg words, poetry, pictures*
- collect ideas and starting points for future compositions
- identify purposes and stimuli for compositions heard at different venues and occasions

ENRICHMENT

- Children could contact composers through the internet and find out how and why they compose.
- Children could meet composers and discuss their approaches.
- Children could attend concerts which include a written or spoken background by the composer and respond to the composer after the event, giving views on the music.