

Unit 9 Animal magic

Exploring descriptive sounds

ABOUT THE UNIT

This unit develops children's ability to create, perform and analyse short descriptive compositions that combine sounds, movements and words.

In this unit, children learn to recognise how sounds can be used to describe different things, *eg animals*. Using this understanding, they create their own music in pairs, add movement and narration and rehearse towards a final performance for others. During the unit they explore how the elements of pitch, duration, dynamics and tempo can be combined to describe different sounds, *eg animal sounds*.

This unit should be revisited using different stimuli, *eg insects, machines*.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit links to the ongoing skills unit (unit 8) through the development of singing, listening skills and physical response to music. It builds on all previous units, particularly 2 and 7, and leads on to units 13 and 18 in the development of descriptive skills. It has a direct link to English through the use of narration and the creation of multimedia presentations. It develops the children's ability to work together in pairs and/or in small groups and clearly demonstrates each child's contribution (PSHE).

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children and teachers have:

- learnt to recognise and use the movement of notes in steps or jumps
- experience of combining sounds
- developed their skills through the activities described in units 2 and 7

VOCABULARY

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

- duration, *eg pulse, rhythm, longer, shorter, sustained*
- tempo, *eg faster, slower*
- pitch, *eg steps, jumps/leaps*
- notation, *eg note names C, D, E*

RESOURCES

Stimulus:

- animals
- music
- song

Sound sources:

- tuned and untuned instruments, including keyboards

EXPECTATIONS

at the end of this unit

most children will:

recognise how musical elements can be used together to compose descriptive music; combine sounds with movement and narrative

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

recognise some descriptive uses of the elements; create descriptive music, *eg based on animals*, that uses a sequence of sounds (often sound effects), movement and words

some children will have progressed further and will:

work in groups of three to four to extend their ideas into longer pieces of music with several layers of sounds

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION: HOW CAN MUSIC DESCRIBE DIFFERENT ANIMALS?

- to identify how music can be used descriptively, *eg to represent different animal characteristics*
- Play the children music that describes animals, *eg Dawn parade and Trust in me from The jungle book, The carnival of the animals, Saint-Saëns*. Compare the animals described with the sounds used. *How does the music help us imagine its size, how it moves, what it looks like, how it behaves?*
- After the class has commented on the more obvious musical features, *eg louder, quieter, higher, lower, faster, slower*, ask them to concentrate on the use of rhythm and melody. *Is the rhythm jumpy, creeping, regular, hopping or gliding?* Tap out some rhythms. Ask the children to listen carefully to the melodies. *Are they mainly high or low, or a mixture? Do they stay on the same note, move in small steps or make big jumps – high to low, low to high?* [Link to unit 8: Listening]

- recognise how musical elements are used and combined to describe different animals

- It is helpful sometimes to tell the children what the two pieces of music will describe and ask them which is which, *eg Which describes the snake? Which describes the elephant? How do you know?*
- This work requires children to think about several elements at once. Some children will need help to consider two elements at the same time, *eg fast and high*.
- Extension activity:** Some children could think about the overall structure to identify how many times the main melody or rhythm is repeated.

EXPLORATION: USING SOUNDS DESCRIPTIVELY

- how to use the musical elements to describe animals
- Sing some songs about animals with the children. Start with a well-known song such as *Three blind mice*. Sing it slowly, then quickly. Start slow and then get faster and then try it the other way around. *Which works best?* Sing using different vocal timbres, *eg sing Baa, baa, black sheep with a wobbly voice, The fox came out on a chilly night with an excited voice*. [Link to unit 8: Singing]
- how to use movement to describe different animals
- Make movements to go with the music heard in the introduction. Try to establish the nature of the animal that is being described before the children start to move. The children should think about:
 - the **level** of movement, *eg high, low, in-between, and combinations of these*
 - the **length** of the steps, *eg short, striding*
 - the **rhythm** of the movement, *eg skipping, sprinting, galloping, scurrying*
 - the **quality** of the movement, *eg heavy, light, smooth, jerky*
 - Combine two or more of these features, *eg fast, small steps; big, strong steps; slow, sliding movements*. [Link to unit 8: Listening]
- how to match sounds and movement descriptively
- Ask the class to work in pairs to create sounds and movements to describe an animal. First choose an animal with distinctive movements. Then select an untuned instrument that will make a sound that matches the way the animal moves. Work out a sequence of sounds and movements – one child plays and the other moves. Change over. Try using a tuned instrument and explore melodic patterns. *Should the pattern move by small steps (close notes) or use bigger steps (two to five notes apart) or leaps (more than five notes apart)? Should the pattern have a mixture of small steps and leaps?* Perform the animal sequences to other members of the class. *Can you guess the animal? What helped you guess?*
- how to use narration with sounds and movement (multimedia)
- Add a narrator, so that one of the group describes what is happening as the other two children move and make the sounds, *eg The crow hopped along the ground and then flapped its wings first slowly and then quickly before taking off. Flapping its wings it flew steadily away over the treetops*.

- sing songs and create different effects
- explore and choose different movements to describe animals
- create sequences of sound in response to the movements and sequences of movements in response to sounds
- combine narration, sounds and movement to describe a chosen animal

- Encourage children to give reasons for their answers, *eg The song sounds better getting faster because ...*
- Extension activity:** Consider more than one element when singing, *eg singing quietly and quickly*. (This is quite demanding.)
- Children could also respond spontaneously (improvise).
- Extension activity:** Ask the children to create longer sequences.
- Do not forget birds, fish, insects and reptiles. Also encourage the pairs to use silence and stillness in both movements and sounds.
- Explore small steps, bigger steps and leaps. Explore combinations, *eg small step, small step, leap*. Combine rhythmic and melodic patterns to increase the effect.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

- to select particular ways in which the elements can be combined expressively
- Ask children in pairs or small groups to compose music describing two animals. The animals should interact with each other, *eg a cat chasing a mouse (from a cartoon), a mouse helping a lion to escape from a net (from the fable) a mongoose attacking a snake (Rikki-Tikki-Tavi), the hare and the tortoise (from the fable)*.
- Once they have decided on their two animals, the children choose an instrument for each one. One of these instruments should be tuned. They should be encouraged to use a tuned instrument (including keyboards) to make a melodic pattern, thinking about how the pitch and rhythm can describe their chosen animal, *eg a regular, fast, repetitive tune played high on a glockenspiel could represent a mouse*.
- Perform to the rest of the class and discuss and make improvements.

- create descriptive music in pairs or small groups

- Encourage children to put into practice all they have learned in previous lessons. They should, at the least, consider the most appropriate instruments, rhythms and melody.
- If keyboards are available, these could be used to provide a wider range of sounds, and to record the melodies.
- Extension activity:** With larger groups of children two instruments could be combined to create a wider range of sounds.

EXTENSION AND FUTURE LEARNING

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

- create longer compositions in groups of four
- create dances for their own compositions
- use their own instruments to play a melody (the instrument could help to select the appropriate animal)
- find music that describes animals and bring it to school
- compose a song about an animal, *eg a pet*, using poetry or using their own words
- celebrate their work in this unit by performing their musical animals to other classes, parents and the community. This could be accompanied by the recitation of poems written by the class
- make music to describe animals in a rain forest, *eg a troop of monkeys, a tiger, a sloth, ants*. Distribute the groups of animals around the room. One person, the explorer, walks slowly through the forest looking for the animals. As they approach each animal or group, the animals play their music. Ask the players to start quietly and, as the explorer approaches them, to get louder. As the explorer moves away the music should get quieter. This could be linked to the idea of sounds getting quieter as they go away from the listener

When this unit is repeated, the focus will remain the same, that is, exploring descriptive sounds, but the content and the expectations should change. The content is changed easily through the use of different examples, stories and other stimuli that could be used to explore descriptive sounds. Expectations are changed by expecting more of the children to achieve the 'most children' and 'some children will have progressed further' statements and by placing greater emphasis on the extension exercises in the 'Points to note' section.

ENRICHMENT

- The class could attend concerts that include animal music.
- Musicians and ensembles could come to the school and invite children to add sections and/or additional layers to their performance.
- The class could go to a musical and experience how music, movement and narrative are brought together.

