

# Listening

Listening and responding to their own and others' music making

Activity Ideas at KS1 & KS2

## Key Stage 1 and 2

Listening and responding to their own and others' music making

The Northern Ireland Curriculum for Music at **Key Stage 1** states that pupils should be enabled to:

**listen and respond to their own and others' music-making, thinking and talking about sounds, effects and musical features in music that they create, perform or listen to.**

For example, children may:

- think and talk about the sounds and effects they have created and imagined and those they hear in the local environment;
- think and talk about simple features in songs they sing and music they listen to;
- use appropriate actions or movement, for example through dance and drama, in response to music they perform and listen to; and
- listen to appropriate music and talk about the sounds in relation to loud/quiet, high/ low, fast/slow and long/short.

At **Key Stage 2**, this progresses to:

**listen and respond to their own and others' music-making, thinking about and discussing a variety of characteristics within music that they create, perform or listen to.**

For example, children may:

- discuss and make suggestions about their own and others' music-making;
- respond imaginatively, for example through movement, drama, dance, to a wider range of music in a variety of styles and media;
- think and talk about the sound characteristics of some common instruments and the kinds of music they play; and
- think and talk about the elements of music and how they are used in music from different styles and cultures.

The ideas in this booklet are an introduction to this requirement. They help you to develop your own ideas and gain confidence in teaching this aspect of Music at Key Stages 1 and 2.

## Key Stage 1

Listening and responding to their own and others' music making

### Learning Intentions

We are learning to:

- classify and compare every day and musical sounds (Managing Information); and
- make links between sounds and what they represent (Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making).

### Suggested Success Criteria

I will be successful if I can:

- discuss sounds in a musical context, using the language of the elements of music; and
- describe the differences between pieces of music using musical language.

### Suggested Learning Activities

#### Introduction

Introduce any activity by first discussing the Learning Intentions and the Suggested Success Criteria. Find out what the children already know by asking key questions such as:

- What do you know about sound?
- Can you name some familiar sounds?
- Can you guess what these sounds are?
- How do you think these sounds were made?

## Key Stage 1

Listening and responding to their own and others' music making

### Activities

These are suggested activities to develop listening and responding skills. Encourage the children to:

- listen to and discuss environmental sounds on different themes, for example down our street, a wet day, and/or on the beach;
- use appropriate vocabulary to describe how we make sounds, such as scraping, tapping or shaking;
- listen to, recognise and make varying musical sounds from different materials;
- use appropriate words to describe the sounds that they hear;
- describe using words such as 'scratchy', 'beepy' or 'rustly', depending on their age and ability; and
- focus more on the Elements of Music such as loud/quiet (**dynamics**), high/low (**pitch**), fast/slow (**tempo**) or long/short (**duration**).

Encourage the children to listen to and discuss features in music, for example:

- sing a current, popular children's song and talk about **mood** and **speed**; or
- listen to *Peter and the Wolf* by Prokofiev, and discuss how each instrument represents a character in the story.

Play various sections of music and talk about the differences in **volume**, **pitch** and **speed**. Suggested music includes:

- *The Nutcracker Suite* by Tchaikovsky:
  - *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy* (quiet); and
  - *Russian Dance* (loud); or
- *Carnival of the Animals* by Saint-Saens.

### Suggested Plenary Questions

How has your understanding of listening to music changed?

How can we use music to describe people, places, moods or feelings?

What have you learned about listening to music?

## Key Stage 2

Listening and responding to their own and others' music making

### Learning Intentions

We are learning to:

- make connections between various styles of music (Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making); and
- classify and compare musical instruments and elements across musical styles (Managing Information).

### Suggested Success Criteria

Pupils can:

- take part in specific musical discussion of set pieces using subject-specific language (the Elements of Music);
- understand how various styles of music are linked by similar elements such as tempo or dynamics; and
- engage with selected pieces of music through interactive, meaningful discussions.

### Suggested Learning Activities

#### Introduction

Linking to prior learning at Key Stage 1, ask the children how music can help bring a story to life. Link this to what they watch on television, their favourite films or plays.

#### Activities

Use these activity suggestions to develop the children's listening and responding skills. Ask the children to:

- imagine their own stories in response to a recorded piece of music such as:
  - *Hall of the Mountain King* by Grieg;
  - *Danse Macabre* by Saint-Saens;
  - *Winter* from *The Four Seasons* by Vivaldi; or
  - *The Planets* by Holst;(For more music options, see the [BBC Ten Pieces](#) resource)
- listen to a wide variety of styles such as dance, film, or television music and identify their purpose;



## Key Stage 2

### Listening and responding to their own and others' music making

- discuss how the instruments influence the mood in contrasting pieces of music, for example in *The Planets* by Holst:
  - *Mars* is loud and powerful, with brass instruments and strong rhythms; and
  - *Neptune* is quiet and mysterious, a freer style with higher pitched sounds;
- listen to and identify different orchestral instruments in extracts of music, focusing on how each instrument produces sound;
- listen to music and identify the different elements the composer used, for example:

| Element          | Example pieces to use   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Patterns</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the repeated patterns in the melodic phrases of <i>Hall of the Mountain King</i> by Grieg;</li><li>• the strong rhythmic patterns in <i>Mars</i> from <i>The Planets</i> by Holst; or</li><li>• the three-note pattern in <i>Carillon</i> by Bizet.</li></ul> |
| <b>Canon</b>     | <i>Canon</i> by Pachelbel   |
| <b>Pitch</b>     | the low pitch in <i>The Elephant in Carnival of the Animals</i> by Saint-Saens  |
| <b>Tempo</b>     | the increasing speed in <i>Hall of the Mountain King</i> by Grieg   |
| <b>Structure</b> | the recurring theme in <i>Vltava</i> by Smetana, and in <i>Pictures at an Exhibition</i> by Mussorgsky  |

Encourage the children to use these and other musical examples as a basis for their own compositions.

### Suggested Plenary Questions

What do you think links different styles of music together?

What similarities would there be between a piece of music for orchestra and a dance track, for example?

How confident do you feel using the elements of music to describe music?