

Food

Opportunities for the children to explore music and sound

Activity 1: Play the Pulse

Finding the pulse to food-related nursery rhymes

Activity 2: Food Glorious Food

Identifying pulse changes in a famous food-themed piece

Activity 3: Dance

Dramatising pulse changes by marching and skipping together

Resources

For this topic, you will need:

- a selection of nursery rhymes;
- one copy of traffic light cards (**red**, **orange** and **green**);
- the Food, Glorious Food scene from the film *Oliver!* (available online); and
- a selection of percussion instruments.

Resource 3: Pulse Visual



Activity 1: Play the Pulse

Ask the children if they know any songs about food. Encourage them to adopt their listening position. Make sure they close out most of their other senses except for their listening sense (eyes and mouth closed and hands still).

Play or sing a selection of nursery rhymes that mention food or drink. These could include:

- Pat-a-cake, Pat-a-cake;
- Old Mother Hubbard;
- Polly Put the Kettle On;
- Sing a Song of Sixpence; or
- Simple Simon.

Choose nursery rhymes that vary in speed, as this will be important as the lesson progresses. After each one, ask the children to report back on which foods or drinks they heard mentioned.

Until the children become more used to this type of musical listening, you may need to play these songs or the specific parts of them a few times. Decide together which nursery rhyme is the class favourite. Take a vote, if necessary. Sing or play the rhyme again. Ask the children to clap along in time as it plays. When the rhyme is over, explain to the children that as they were clapping along, they were finding the steady beat – the pulse – of the song.

Using **Resource 3: Pulse Visual**, explain the term pulse by linking it to its medical meaning. Discuss what a stethoscope is. Tell them that a doctor might use it to find our pulse. Explain that just as we need a heartbeat, a piece of music needs a pulse.

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Tell the children that they will play the pulse of these nursery rhymes on some percussion instruments, but only if they become very good at following some special signals. Show them the **red**, **orange** and **green** cards. Discuss these in relation to the traffic lights they see on the road. Explain:

- **Red** is for **STOP** – set the instrument down and don't touch;
- **Orange** is for **GET READY** – gently lift the instrument up, but don't play it yet; and
- **Green** is for **GO** – play the instrument enthusiastically!

Explain to the children what a conductor is. Remind the children of the importance of watching you, their conductor, as they play their instruments. They need to see which card you show.

Before using real instruments, the children should pass the Pretend Instrument Test, using imaginary instruments. If the children have not had much experience with percussion, you may need to show, name and model playing a selection of more familiar instruments.

Ask the children to choose their favourite instrument from this selection. They can then pretend to play the pulse of the nursery rhymes on their chosen instrument, responding to the traffic light signals that you show in different sequences. This encourages the children to learn the importance of following the conductor's lead before they play a real instrument.

When the children are confidently following your signals with their pretend instruments, give them real ones and repeat the activity. By this stage, the children should start to notice differences in pulse between the different nursery rhymes. Encourage them to use musical language to describe the differences. For example, Mother Hubbard has a slow pulse and Polly Put the Kettle On has a faster pulse.



Activity 2: Food Glorious Food

Ask the children if they know what a musical is. Encourage them to share any experiences they have had of either watching or performing in one. Explain that they are going to think of a popular musical that contains a very famous food song.

Explain some of the background to the musical *Oliver!*, including the workhouse and Oliver's vulnerable position as an orphan there. Focus on the song title Food Glorious Food. Show the children a clip from the film (available online).

Encourage the children to notice the foods on display in the film clip. Discuss which foods are glorious (the foods those in charge of the workhouse eat) and which are not glorious (the gruel served to the boys).

Revisit what the children have learned about the pulse as the steady beat (show the **Resource 3: Pulse Visual** again). Encourage the children to notice how the workhouse boys are keeping the pulse. Prompt them to notice how the boys

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march to keep the pulse at the start and towards the end, they skip to the pulse. This should lead to discussion about how the pulse changes in the song. The children can see this in the film clip as the boys move from marching reluctantly to get their gruel (slow pulse) to skipping around the tables singing a list of foods they would like to eat (faster pulse).

See if the children notice these pulse changes themselves as they resume their listening positions and clap or tap along to the audio version of the song. To help children who find this more difficult, encourage the whole class to work together by stamping their feet gently (while still sitting in the circle). Then encourage the class to progress to swaying from side as the pulse gets quicker.

To develop this further, give the children percussion instruments to play along to the pulse. Encourage the children to discuss which instruments would be best for playing along to the slower pulse at the start of the song (perhaps drums, wood blocks or castanets). Then ask them which instrument would be best for demonstrating the faster pulse towards the end (perhaps bells, tambourines or maracas). Divide the class into two groups. Ask each group to follow your traffic light signals so that they know when to get ready, play and stop. You could also teach the children the words of the chorus to sing.



Activity 3: Dance!

When you feel the children are confident with the song and can readily identify the pulse changes, encourage them to showcase what they have learned through dance. This will require a larger space. Move to the assembly hall or make the dance part of a physical education lesson.

Explain to the children that they are going to act out the Food Glorious Food song. As a class, watch the video again. Point out that the song and dance is effective because the boys work as a team and move their bodies together to the pulse.

To show the children that this is much harder than it looks, ask them to form a large circle. Then, ask them to march and skip together without bumping into each other. Then divide the class into smaller groups of no more than eight and appoint a leader for each group.

Begin with marching. Ask each group to march in a circle to the steady beat of a tambourine, drum or woodblock. Ask the team leader to make sure everyone moves their feet and arms at the same time, just as the workhouse boys do in the film clip. Ask the groups doing particularly well to model this for the others.

For an added challenge, make a sound on another percussion instrument to alert the children to change the direction they are marching. Can the group manage to do this? As the children become more confident, encourage them to perform this marching to the first part of the audio version of the song.

The more difficult part of the dance comes as the pulse speed increases and the children hold hands to skip sideways around the circle. Again, the leader should make sure that everyone in the group begins skipping on the same leg.

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As before, the children's movements should match the pulse demonstrated on the teacher's percussion instrument before they perform along to the audio version. This will allow the children to build up their skipping speed gradually and hopefully prevent any accidents.

Some team leaders might also recognise the value of calling out 1, 2, 3, 4 (or something else) to keep their group moving together effectively.

Just as for the marching, if the children are managing well, you could encourage them to include a few changes of direction as they skip. They can then perform the whole dance. You could perhaps award prizes to the group that works together most successfully or for the team leader that shows most skill in managing the group.

