

Houses and Homes

Opportunities for the children to explore music and sound

Activity 1: Build it up!

Using the C major scale alongside physical tower-building to teach the terms low, high and pitch

Activity 2: Pitch It Right

Exploring the link between pitch and characters' voices in stories

Activity 3: Position it!

Understanding pitch as displayed on a simple musical stave

Resources

For this topic, you will need:

- a glockenspiel or xylophone and beater, or a piano
- images of story characters (high and low-pitched voices) or puppets
- paper cups
- masking tape
- a copy of the Three Little Pigs story
- hula hoops (or equivalent) for Venn diagram
- stickers printed from the Wolf and Pig template

Resource 4: Pitch Word Card

Resource 5: Wolf and Pig Flashcards

Resource 6: Mini Wolf and Pig

Activity 1: Build it Up!

Show the children pictures of different types of homes. Discuss these pictures with them. Draw their attention to high houses like flats and houses built on stilts in countries prone to flooding.

Show the children a glockenspiel (or equivalent) and beater and introduce the terms. Explain that you hit the metal bars with a beater to make the sound. Alternatively, use a piano and discuss pitch using the keys from left to right.

Tell the children that they are going to use paper cups to build their own high house structure. Explain that as they build, they will hear some sounds on the instrument you are using.

Ask them to listen to the sounds as they build. Encourage them to tell you what they notice.

Choose children to help construct the paper cup tower by placing eight cups on top of each other. Start with the first cup upside down and then place the next cup on top the right way up. Alternate the rest of the cups to complete the tower. As they add each cup to the tower, play notes that get higher on the glockenspiel. Start from low C and play up the octave (8 notes) to high C: C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C.

The notes are usually engraved on to the metal bars of the glockenspiel, so you can find them easily.



Houses and Homes

As you do this, ask the children to tell you what they have noticed. Prompt them to identify that the sounds are getting higher. Introduce the term pitch. Explain that this means whether a sound is high or low. Show the children **Resource 4** to give them a visual idea of what pitch is.

Some young children will find identifying this change in pitch difficult. To help them to understand what is happening, try holding the glockenspiel upright so that they can see the notes you play. Ask the children to build the tower again. Encourage them to watch the

beater as it moves higher each time they add a cup. Play the lowest note (low C) and the highest note (high C) a few times for the children to listen to the difference in sound.

To reinforce this learning, introduce a game where you play a variety of high and low notes. Ask the children to show whether the pitch (use term repeatedly) is high or low by standing for high and sitting for low. If they are unsure, encourage them to check the position of the beater on the glockenspiel.



Activity 2: Pitch it Right

Introduce the idea of thinking about pitch in characters' voices in well-known stories. Ask the children to think of any story book characters who speak in a low-pitched voice (model low-pitched speaking) or any who speak in a high-pitched voice (model high-pitched speaking).

Read out a character's name, for example the Big Bad Wolf. Then, use your normal voice to read out the associated phrase, for example 'I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down'.

Ask the children whether the character should say the phrase in a high-pitched or a low-pitched voice. Continue for the following characters.

- The giant from Jack and the Beanstalk: Fee Fi Fo Fum (low pitch)
- Daddy bear from Goldilocks: Who's been sitting in my chair? (low pitch)
- The Gruffalo: I hear a hoot in the trees ahead (low pitch)
- The Three Little Pigs: Not by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin (high pitch)

- Baby bear from Goldilocks: Someone is sleeping in my bed (high pitch)
- Tinkerbell from Peter Pan: All you need is faith, trust and a little pixie dust (high pitch)

Alternatively, use puppets for some of the characters. Here the children simply listen to the voice used with each puppet and identify the correct pitch.

Create a simple Venn diagram to sort the characters into high or low pitch voices, using images of the characters or puppets for sorting.

As the children become more confident at distinguishing between the pitches, read the story of one or more of these characters so that the children can practice identifying the pitches of the different voices in context. The Three Little Pigs is a good example as it has both high and low-pitched voices. Read the story a few times. Ask the children to repeat the low-pitched speech of the wolf and high-pitched speech of the three pigs directly after you. Then encourage them to repeat the phrases themselves, in the appropriate high or low voice.

Houses and Homes



Activity 3: Position It!

Introduce the musical staff. Explain that this is a set of five horizontal lines and four spaces that each line represents a different musical pitch. For this activity, you will use just two lines. Create two parallel lines of equal length on the floor with masking tape.

Discuss the position of the lines with the children: one is high and one is low. Using **Resource 5: Wolf and Pig Flashcards**, ask the children to decide which character would be best suited for each line. Prompt them to realise that the wolf should go on the low line. This is because of his low-pitched voice. The pig should go onto the high line because of his high-pitched voice. Discuss with the children how music is written, that the higher notes are written on the higher lines and the lower notes are written on the lower lines.

Using more **Wolf and Pig Flashcards**, ask different children to select and place a pig or wolf card onto the staff in the right position as you repeat one of the following phrases in the appropriate pitch:

- 'I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house down' (low pitch)
- 'Not by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin' (high pitch)

Eventually, the children will have a sequence of wolf and pig pictures across the musical staff. Wolves will be on the lowest line and pigs on the highest line, although the characters can appear in any order.

Explain how their hard work has created a piece of music that they can now perform. Divide the class into pigs or wolves. Print **Resource 6: Mini Wolf and Pig** and give each child a wolf or pig image to remind them which character they are. Remind the class it is important to follow the lead of their conductor. Introduce or revise the term, if they have completed the Rhyming Land topic in this resource. As you conduct, point to each note along the musical staff. Ask the children to chorus the two main phrases from the story in low- or high-pitched voices, standing or sitting (depending on their character).

