

Lesson 1

If you are not a music specialist you will need to have read the introduction to the book before starting on the first lesson. Don't be alarmed by the length of these five set lesson plans. The actual lesson is approximately forty-five minutes in length. The explanation is to help you teach effectively. Many concepts are introduced in these five lessons. Don't worry if the children don't have much depth of understanding at this stage. You have the rest of the academic year to really work with these concepts and develop their integral skills.

Objectives:

- To get used to working with four different note values – **quavers, crotchets, minims, semibreves** – focusing on keeping in time
- To learn a new song – *Chop Chop!*
- To understand how rhythm and beat help with moving to music effectively
- To become familiar with 'Russian Dance' from *The Nutcracker Suite* by Tchaikovsky

Additional Resources:

- CD tracks 1 and 2. From now on the CD should always be at hand.
- Whiteboard or Blackboard. From now on this should always be at hand.
- **Crotchet, minim, quavers, semibreve** notation cards.
- Lyrics of the song *Chop Chop!*
- CD of 'Russian Dance' from *The Nutcracker Suite* by Tchaikovsky

Listen to the beat! (working with 4 different beats)

- Tell the children they are going to listen carefully to the CD (track 1) to try and notice how many different **speeds of beat** they can hear. They are also listening out for lower notes and higher notes. Is there any pattern to this? So sit and listen in silence until the track is finished and then talk about what you heard. (The children should have heard four different speeds of beat, and they may have noticed that there were alternate sections of lower and higher notes, of equal length.)
- Play the track again. This time join in clapping with each section of lower notes, and clapping very quietly with each section of higher notes. Concentrate hard to see if you can all recall the order of the speeds when you talk about it at the end: 1) medium 2) slow 3) medium 4) fast 5) medium 6) very slow 7) medium

Understanding how the beats fit into each other

- For those of you who haven't covered the KS1 scheme, you need to know the musical names for the different notes and their varying speeds of beat. If we are being technically correct these are not actually speeds but **durations** of time. This will become clear at the end of this lesson; don't worry about it for now. Hold up the four different notation cards which show the four different beats that you heard on the CD.



medium speed

crotchet



slow speed

minim



fast speed

quavers (always in pairs for now)

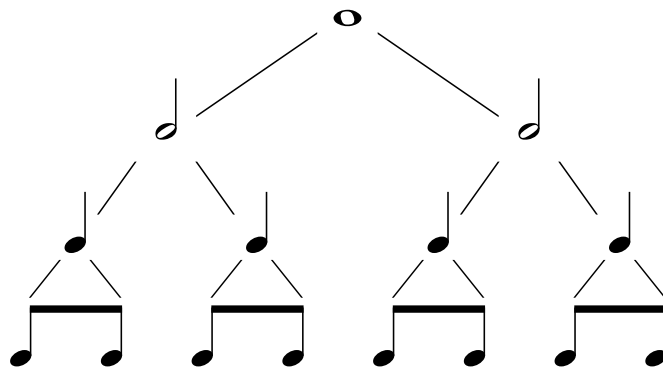


very slow speed

semibreve

- Spend some time checking that the children are certain of the names of the notes, their relative speeds and their musical symbols. Have they thoroughly grasped that two quavers fit into one crotchet, two crotchets fit into one minim, two minims fit into one semibreve? Check out the diagram below. You might like to write

it up on the board and/or write some ‘musical sums’ on the board for the children to do. There are three examples below:



$$\text{Quarter note} + \text{Quarter note} = ?$$

$$\text{Two eighth notes} + \text{Two eighth notes} = ?$$

$$\text{Quarter note} + \text{Quarter note} + \text{Quarter note} = ?$$

- Listen carefully to track 2 of the CD and see if you can hear all four of the different beats being played at the same time.

Stepping and clapping round the room

- Get ready to walk round the room. With track 1 take eight medium-paced steps for the first **phrase** (or musical sentence) then stand still and clap gently at that same speed for the higher phrase. Continue like this for the rest of the track, matching your speed of footsteps with the beat for each lower phrase, and standing still to clap each higher phrase.
- Half the class should do the walking while the other half appraise, then swap. Discuss which children were anticipating the change of beat so managed to change their steps to fit the new beat at exactly the right moment.

Singing *Chop Chop!*

- Start to learn the song *Chop Chop!* using the lyrics provided. Alternatively this particular song is quite easy to learn by rote, with the help of a few key words written on the board. CD track 3 has the vocal line to help you. It’s up to you how to facilitate the learning process. With a song like this it works well to play right through the song on the CD while encouraging the children to join in with the chorus. At the same time they will be grasping the slightly more complex verses. With other songs you might like to use the pause button on the remote so the children can copy a section at a time. We will be re-visiting this song in the next two lessons so don’t feel you have to learn it completely here. This ‘gradual’ learning should apply to all songs in the book.

Introducing a piece of classical music – ‘Russian Dance’ from *The Nutcracker Suite* by Tchaikovsky

- First listen to the music on your CD (it’s only sixty seconds long!). As you listen, try clapping to the music’s obvious quick beat (NB always do small claps for a quick beat). When everyone is secure with that, after around half a minute, lead the children into clapping a beat that is twice as slow. When they are secure with that, lead them into a beat that is twice as slow as *that*.
- Play the track again and repeat the three different speeds of clapping, to help develop the children’s all-important ‘inner pulse’.

Working out actions to go with ‘Russian Dance’

- For now just get used to the following three simple actions. Practise them with the music, in any order, changing from one to another whenever you want.

Chapter 5

How to plan your own lessons using the *Mix and Match* section of the book

This chapter deals with the principals of music teaching: how to structure a lesson by using activities or extensions of activities from any of the set lesson plans which will develop all the children musically, and be rewarding and fun. Don't skip this section, as it's vital!

The pointers below explain how to proceed. First it should be said that all of the activities in the *Mix and Match* section fit into more than one category. For example as well as developing pitch skills, when singing you are also working on rhythm and learning about composition, from the structure of the song.

Keep these principles at the front of your mind all the time:

- Let's turn the tide of insensitivity and encourage alertness and sensitivity
- Let's re-create a **respect for sound** and for our own sound parameters
- Let's be very critical about the sounds we create, particularly in performance, aiming for the highest possible standard of musical competence and creativity
- Let's make music education fun but keep our expectations high
- Let's inspire children
- Let's keep children active in mind or body or both whether they are listening, making music or composing
- Let's remember that the more positive the contribution, the greater the rewards

Keep these skills in mind:

- Listening
- Looking
- Thinking
- Communicating
- Focusing
- Memorising
- Co-ordinating
- Being 'in time'
- Being 'in tune'
- Being involved

Follow these general rules:

- Have aural, visual and kinaesthetic elements to every lesson.
- Have *at least* three different starting points in a lesson, taken from at least two different headings.
- Try to have a breadth and balance of activities within any one lesson and throughout the term.
- Don't be afraid to repeat activities as often as you want, either because it is a popular activity and therefore creates a bit of light relief after a more demanding activity, or because the children need more time with the activity to develop the required skills and/or to master the concept. You will notice how the learning in the set lessons is strongly spiral, where activities are taught and then revisited and extended.
- Don't be afraid to go off at a tangent if say, you are suddenly inspired by a piece of music you have heard.
- Start with a warm-up activity and keep the same one for quite a few lessons.
- Have instruments/cards/other resources at the ready.
- Have zero tolerance for 'twiddling' and for sound that interferes with the purposeful sound you are making.
- It doesn't matter if what you had planned for one lesson spills over into the next. If you achieve the equivalent of ten lessons of forty-five minutes per term, working in this way, you will be giving the children a very worthwhile and fun music education, and if you're achieving this as a non-specialist, you should feel proud