



15–20 mins

Objective and Musical Focus

Focused listening skills; Understanding lengths and qualities of sounds; Identifying the origins of sounds; Representing sound visually through images

Instruments?

Yes, tuned and untuned percussion

Accessibility

Suitable for Vision, Motor, Hearing and Cognitive impairments with minor adaptation.

1. Focused listening and structure

What can you hear?

EYs children listen most effectively when they are actively listening. Unless there is an accompanying visual medium, we are relying on the children focussing just on their aural skills, and some find this very difficult to do. The following suggestion therefore uses a visual prop to help support the children develop their focussed listening skills.

Find a puppet or soft toy that will be attractive to the children. You can use this puppet/soft toy for a range of listening activities in the future, so it would be good to choose a special musical/listening name for the character. We have named our character 'Moosy-Shhh!'.

Tell the children that Moosy-Shhh! is a very special listener. They love listening very carefully to music they have never heard before and discovering new things about it. They really really wanted to come to the session today to share a song they have just heard, as they think the children will enjoy listening to it.

Ask the children to settle into a comfortable sitting position. Play the song *Dream On* using the interactive online tool *Play It!* As the song is playing, move the character gently to reflect the pulse and the calming mood of the music. Something along the lines of: swaying back and forth to the pulse during the verse, and making some long, smooth movements through the chorus.

At the end, Moosy-Shhh! could whisper something to you. You could then pass the message on to the children that Moosy-Shhh! would like to know what they heard while they were listening.

At this stage of learning, the questions can be quite general:

- Why do you think Moosy-Shhh! likes this so much?
- What did you hear?
- What did you like?
- Did it make you think of anything in particular?





Encourage a discussion using a range of adjectives to describe the different sound qualities. For example;

- ‘Sparkly, twinkly’ sounds for some of the instruments
- ‘Smooth vocals’
- ‘Crisp, clean’ sounds for the side/snare drum



Play the song *Dream On* using the *Bring the Noise: Play It!* interactive tool on our website.

Try to mimic making the different sounds as you discuss them - acting out singing, beating the snare drum, and gentle movements for the remaining background percussion instruments.

Listen to the song once more to see if you can all notice some of the prominent features - voice, (and possibly backing vocals), the snare drum, and the ‘twinkly’ sounds. You could get Moosy-Shhh! to respond with different movements to reflect the different timbres of the instruments.



Extension: Listen to the song again and try to move Moosy-Shhh! to correspond with the different sections of the song.

For example, sitting and swaying gently for the verses, and then standing and moving his/her arms for the choruses. You may find that the children instinctively copy these actions.

At the end of the song, ask the children if they noticed how Moosy-Shhh! moved, and explain to them that songs often have verses (which often have different lyrics each time) and choruses (which are repeated through the song). If you have time, you could play the song once more, copying Moosy-Shhh!’s actions, and then ask the children which action corresponds to the verse, and which to the chorus.



10-15 mins



Check out the Teacher Techniques section of the Bring the Noise website for more videos on group activities.



2. Timbre

What is making that sound?

It is important for us to be able to distinguish a variety of sounds in everyday life. In this activity, we focus not so much on what different sounds represent, but the variety of different types, or *qualities* of sounds. For example - the quality of sound produced by the male vocalist in this song is totally different to the sound produced by the accompanying snare drum.

Use any sound makers. Instruments are ideal, but equally, you could choose a variety of everyday sounds. To link with this particular song, we are going to use 4 distinct sounds: (i) our voices, (ii) a drum, (iii) a tuned metal instrument - chime bars/glockenspiel/triangle and we will introduce (iv) a woodblock/claves sound.

Demonstrate each sound to the children:

- Make some long sounds with your voice that cover a range of pitches - sliding from high to low, or vice versa, and holding one note for a long time.
- Tap a drum. If you want to be specific, you could use drumsticks to produce the 'clean' sound that is used in the song, but if you want the children to have a go at playing the drum, a soft-headed beater is better for this age group.
- Strike the chime bar or glockenspiel. Ask the children to note how your beater 'bounces' to produce a resonant sound. Demonstrate how striking the instrument and keeping the beater on the metal produces a dull sound.
- Tap the woodblock or claves. Ask the children how this wooden instrument sounds different to the metal chime bars.

Extension: Use a range of beaters on a drum and discuss the variety of sounds that could be achieved on just the one instrument.



Now ask the children to close their eyes and you will choose one of these instruments to play to see if they can recognise the sound.

Once the children are familiar with the game, find a big box, or screen, and place the instruments behind it. Again, play one and ask the children to recognise what is playing.

This is a fun activity, as you can then invite individual children to come and make a sound. However, it can be difficult to maintain the group's attention over an extended length of time. To keep them listening actively, make individual picture cards of the four sound-makers you are using so that the children can hold up the different cards to match the sounds. In this way it becomes a truly inclusive, group activity.

To finish the activity, place four baskets to correspond to the four sound-pictures in front of the group. As you make each sound (e.g. voice-sounds) the children have to put their pictures back into the relevant basket.



20 mins

3. Long and short sounds

How can we make sounds visual?

What you will need:

- A sand tray/whiteboard/chalkboard placed in the centre of the children's circle, positioned so that they can all see it easily
- 2 x double-sided pictures
- Picture 1: Someone singing and on the other side a long, smooth line
- Picture 2: A snare drum and on the other side, a variety of scattered dots

Listen to the first verse of *Dream On* using the *Play It!* interactive. Ask the children to concentrate on the solo voice.



Question: Is the voice making long, smooth sounds or short, ‘bouncy’ sounds? [*The voice is making long, smooth sounds*]

How can we show some long, smooth sounds using our arms/hands/fingers to draw in the air in front of us?

Listen to the opening fragment of the song again, moving your arms to match the long phrases (musical sentences) of the vocalist. Encourage the children to use long, flowing movements.

Now, listen to the first verse again, but ask the children to wave at you when they hear the drum begin to play.

Question: Is the drum joining lots of short, bouncy sounds together, or is it playing one long sound?

NB: This is a really difficult question for early learners. When taken as a whole, many children will describe the drum as making long sounds, as it plays for quite a sustained time in one go. That is why this question has to be framed in such a way that the children are guided towards the correct response.

How can we show some short, bouncy sounds using our arms/hands/fingers to draw in the air in front of us?

Listen to the opening fragment of the song again, moving your arms to match the short bouncy sounds of the drum and encourage the children to use short, detached movements.

Play an aural version of ‘hide and seek’ with the *Play It!* interactive by removing the vocals stem. Ask the children what is missing? Can we make some long vocal sounds to replace what’s missing? Play it again, adding your own vocals.

Then remove the percussion stem. Ask the children what is missing? Can we make some short, bouncy sounds to replace the drum? Play it again, making your own imaginative drum sounds.



Play an aural version of ‘hide and seek’ with the *Play It!* interactive by removing different stems.



Now to make a visual representation of the long and short sounds:

- How can we draw a long sound in the sand? [*one elongated line*]
- How can we draw lots of short sounds? [*a collection of dots*]
- How can we make a long, smooth sound with our bodies?
- How can we make short, bouncy sounds with our bodies?

Ask your class: “Who would like to come and draw the sound that I am making?” Ask for a volunteer to reproduce your sound in the sand.

Then, who would like to make the sound that the previous volunteer has drawn? Ask for two volunteers, one to draw and one to make sounds.

Finally, show the children the two picture cards, so that you are reinforcing the concept of long, smooth vocal lines when you see the singer/long line, and short bouncy sounds when you see the picture of the drum/random dots.

Put the pictures into two separate envelopes. Play the song and choose one envelope to pass around the circle in a way similar to that of the party game, pass the parcel. Encourage the children to pass the envelope in time with the pulse.

Stop the track intermittently. Ask the child who is holding the envelope when the music stops, to peek inside, but not show anybody else their card. Then they have to make the sound that is on the card, and the rest of the group have to guess what is printed on the card. The child can then take the card out and show it to the group.

Start the track again and continue the game. Keep swapping the two envelopes so that the children don't know which one is in circulation.



Asking children to identify the pattern of sounds is an excellent way of developing aural memory.

Extension 1: When the children are familiar and confident with this, add another envelope or two into the circle at the same time. When the music stops, ask the children individually to make their sounds, one after another. Then the rest of the group have to identify the pattern of the sounds e.g. long-short-short-long etc. This is an excellent way of developing aural memory alongside becoming confident in identifying long and short sounds.

Extension 2: Prepare enough envelopes to give every child in the group one. You can then, as a group, create your own long and short composition. Keep a strict beat going (by playing a woodblock for example) and ask each child to have a turn over 2 beats. You can then go around the circle reasonably quickly, whilst giving each child a turn. Appoint another child to follow you around the circle making a video of your 'Long and Short sounds' performance.



Key words

Rhythm: a mixture of long and short sounds combined together over a steady pulse

Phrase: a musical 'sentence'. (You can often identify phrases as they have resting points similar to a full-stop in written language. If you listen to the first verse of the song, you can hear that there are 4 phrases to correspond to the 4 lines of the lyrics).

Timbre: the quality of sound.

Structure: the way a song is structured.