



10 mins

Objective and Musical Focus

Identifying instruments;
Playing instruments;
Pulse; Pitch

Instruments?

Yes - Pitched and unpitched percussion instruments

Accessibility

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

1. Warm up Activity

'Percussion Palace'

This is a great warm up activity which improves listening skills and helps children identify a variety of percussion instruments. You can play the game as a whole class activity, in teams or working individually.

You'll need 4–6 different percussion instruments for this activity. They can be pitched (eg, glockenspiels, xylophones etc) or unpitched (eg wood block, drum, tambourine) and you only need one of each. The aim of the game is for the children to be able to identify the sounds of the different instruments, so choose instruments that have different timbre/sound qualities to them.

To begin, explain to the class that we have walked into an imaginary palace full of percussion instruments. "There are 'tambourines' (or whichever instrument you have chosen) that sound like this... (play the tambourine), there are wood blocks that sound like this..." and so on until you have said the names and played the sounds of all the instruments.

The children now close their eyes and the teacher plays one of the instruments. The children open their eyes and have to decide which instrument they think it was.

There are a few different twists to try with this game, for example:

- After the children have opened their eyes, instead of saying the name of the instrument, the children have to pretend to play the instrument they think made the sound. If they 'play' the wrong instrument they're out.
- If you have a big space in which to play the game, assign different areas of the room to each instrument sound. For example, "this corner is for the tambourine, this side for the drum..." etc. When the children open their eyes they have to move to the correct instrument area and if they get it wrong they are out.

To extend the game even further, when the children have their eyes closed, play more than one instrument at a time.





10 mins



2. Song: *Dream On*

Have a listen to the song *Dream On*.

Have a class discussion about the music: How would you describe the music? What instruments can you hear? What is the song about? What do you think of when you listen to this music? How does the music make you feel?



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

Teach your class the chorus of the song:

On...
Oh, Dream on
Oh, Dream on
Oh, Dream on

3. Main Activity

Pitched vs Unpitched

This activity enables the children to play a variety of pitched and unpitched percussion instruments along to the song, *Dream On*. The pitched percussion instruments are going to play along to the verses, while the unpitched percussion instruments play with the choruses.

Pitched Percussion

Ask the class what they think pitched percussion instruments are. Do they know the names of any? Pitched percussion instruments are instruments that have a variety of different pitches, for example glockenspiels, xylophones and boom whackers.

Before playing the instruments, teach your class how to say these two phrases (with 'sh' said as a shushing sound):

C C C 'sh' / F G A 'sh'

C C C 'sh' / F G F 'sh'



40 mins





An effective way of teaching short musical phrases like this is by using the call and response technique - over a steady pulse you say a bit and the children repeat, and so on until you have taught the whole phrase:



For more activities using pitched percussion, try the Do-Re-Mi activity from the Teacher Techniques section on our website.

Teacher	Children
C C C 'sh'	C C C 'sh'
F G A 'sh'	F G A 'sh'
C C C 'sh' / F G A 'sh'	C C C 'sh' / F G A 'sh'

Once they can say this with confidence, ask them to clap while saying a letter, but not when they say a 'sh' (the 'sh' represents a rest in the music so instead of clapping you could show this by having open palms).

Once the class can say and clap the phrases with confidence, only then introduce the pitched percussion instruments.



You may want to have one instrument between two people and encourage each pair to help one another as they take turns to play.

Firstly, and without beaters, the children need to identify which notes they to play. Shout out one of the notes from the above phrases, and the children have 3 seconds to put their finger on it.

Now try saying the above phrases and instead of clapping, the children use their fingers to tap the note at the same time. Finally, distribute the beaters and practice playing the phrases on the instruments.

You can now play this along to the verse sections of the track. The first verse begins after a short introduction (when the singing starts), and you can play the above phrases twice.



Unpitched Percussion

Ask the class what are unpitched percussion instruments? Do they know the names of any? Unpitched percussion instruments are instruments that don't have pitches, for example wood blocks, drums and tambourines.



Play *Dream On* and when you get to the chorus practice marching along to the pulse/beat of the music. Instead of marching can you and your class come up with some other body percussion sounds or actions to do along to the beat?

Choose 4 different sounds/actions and practice doing 8 beats of each along to the chorus of the song. (The entire chorus lasts 32 beats).

Marching	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Pat Thighs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Tap Shoulders	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Nod Head	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Now replace the body percussion sounds/actions with unpitched percussion instruments. For example, the first 8 beats could be played by the wood blocks, the second set of 8 by the tambourines and so on.

Finally, try playing both pitched and unpitched percussion sections along to *Dream On*.



Pull quote a tip or most pertinent instruction from the main body text.



4. Troubleshooting

In the game 'Percussion Palace', encourage the children to learn and say the names of the instruments when they are guessing which instrument was played, not just point to it!

If the children are using large pitched percussion instruments with lots of pitches, explain that they ought to play F, G, A, C notes that are closest to each other. (i.e. not jumping from a really low F to a very high C at the other end of the instrument).

If the class are struggling to learn the phrases in the unpitched percussion activity, slow down the pulse and teach the phrases using the call and response technique in smaller chunks.

Curriculum Links

Science



Key words

Body Percussion: sounds made using your body.

Pitch: whether a sound is low or high.

Pitched Instruments: instruments that can play a variety of different pitches, for example a glockenspiel or xylophone.

Pulse: a steady beat, like a ticking clock.

Timbre: the sound quality of an instrument.

Unpitched Percussion: percussion instruments that don't have pitches, for example a drum or wood block.