



5–7 mins

Objective and Musical Focus

Pitch; Identifying and understanding instruments

Instruments?

Yes

Accessibility

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

1. Warm up Game

High – Low

High-Low is a great game to introduce children to the concept of pitch. You'll need an instrument that has at least 2 different pitches for this game and sounds that ring out more; chime bars or glockenspiels are preferable.

Explain to the children that you have two different sounds; one high sound and one low. Pitch is the word we use in music to describe if the sound is high or low.



An example of usable pitches for this activity on a keyboard.

When you play the high pitched sound to the low pitched sound, the children have to sit down. In reverse, if you play from low pitch to high pitch, the children have to stand up.

Encourage the children to listen before they move as you could trick them by playing two notes that are the same pitch for example, or by playing from low to high, when they are already stood up.



When selecting which two notes to use for this game, try and use notes that are five notes apart.



5–7 mins



2. Song: *Bass Face*

Watch the YolanDa's Band Jam video *Bass Face*.

Explain to your class the musical term 'pitch', meaning how high or low a sound is.

At different times during the song, YolanDa asks that you 'make a bass face' or that you 'put your hands up'.



Can your class work out what is happening in the music, in terms of pitch, when you do the 'bass face' and what changes in the music when YolanDa asks you to 'put your hands up'?



Help lead your class to do the two different actions at the correct moments in the song.

The children ought to be making a 'bass face' when YolanDa is playing the saxophone using low sounds (low pitch) and 'put their hands up' when YolanDa changes to playing her saxophone using high sounds (high pitch).



20–25 mins

3. Main Activity

Identifying and Understanding Instruments

Explain to your class that all sound is made when objects vibrate, and that music is made from different sounds. Every time something vibrates it sends invisible sound waves to our ears that our brain understands as sound.

If something vibrates very quickly it will make a high pitch sound. If something vibrates slowly that makes a low pitch sound.

Have a collection of musical instruments laid out in a pile in front of your class.



For more on vibrations making sound, watch the Seymour Science video for Sound on the BBC Bitesize website.



Ask a child to choose one instrument and explore it together with everyone:

- How do you play it?
- Is there more than one way of playing it?
- How do you think it will sound? (Demonstrate by using different parts of your body/voice)
- How can we make the sound louder or quieter?
- What material(s) is it made of?
- What is the name of the instrument?



Repeat the exercise for several different instruments. Explain to your class that musical instruments are often grouped into sections or 'families' based on what they're made of, how they look or how they're played.

For example, there is the 'brass' family where all instruments made of brass belong.

- Do your class know any instruments from the brass family?
- How do you play brass instruments?

There is also the 'percussion' family and that includes hundreds of instruments. Ask the class similar questions about what percussion instruments they know and how they're played.

Now challenge a small group of children to sort your instruments in the classroom into families. Give them 3 minutes to do this. Once the time is up, have a class discussion about the group's decisions and allow the instruments to be moved if necessary.

Explain that as well as being grouped into families based on what they're made of or how they're played, instruments can also be grouped together based on how they sound.



To use pitch as an example, show your class a picture of a double bass. Do they think the instrument could play high or low pitches?

Then show the class a picture of a flute. Are the sounds it plays of high or low pitch?



Repeat the sorting exercise, but this time the groups of children sort instruments into groups of high, low, and medium-pitched instruments.

Curriculum Links

Science

Dance/Movement

Have a class discussion about their decisions:

- What do they notice about the instruments in each group?
- Are they all from the same family or does each section contain a mixture?
- In terms of size, how do the low pitch instruments look compared to the high pitch instruments? (Larger instruments often play lower pitches and smaller instruments can play higher pitches).

4. Troubleshooting



Key words

Pitch: whether a sound is high or low.

Pitched instrument: instruments that can play a variety of different pitches.

Rhythm: a pattern of long and short sounds.

Timbre: the quality of a particular sound.

When playing 'high-low', encourage the children to listen before they move and go with their instincts, rather than just copy their friends or the person next to them.

If the children are struggling to identify the difference in pitch between the notes, sing (while playing your high pitched note) 'can you hear my high pitch' to whatever rhythm you like, and let the children sing it back.

Then sing (while playing your low pitched note), 'can you hear my low pitch', and let the children copy that. Add hand movements to this, for example, when they are singing high, their hands are up in the air.

This physicalising of the sound helps children who are struggling to differentiate the pitch just by listening.