



TUTORIAL 1: SONIC BATTLE

Hello, I'm Nigel and welcome to **Macbeth**. We're going to be learning eight songs together as we find out about one of William Shakespeare's best-known works and at the end you'll be ready to perform a concert of them...or even put on a performance of our specially-written version of the play.

The songs are written in different styles and if any of you are not normally that keen on singing, don't worry because there are songs written with you especially in mind. Here's a clue...

*You know we fight the armies all across the land,
with a shield of hope and a sword in hand.*

The play is set a long time ago in medieval Scotland and centres on the character of Macbeth and his ambition to become King. It's a very dark play, with lots of mystery, secrets and murder...and also lots of dramatic action!

So let's get started on our first song, which is called 'Sonic battle'. It's about a battle between the faithful followers of King Duncan and a group of Scottish rebels who're fighting alongside the invading Norwegians. Listen to the opening verse, which is sung by King Duncan's loyal soldiers.

*Ours not to reason why, ours just to do or die.
Good fighting men are we, we serve his Majesty.
And with the pipe and drum, the rebel army comes.*

The tune consists of a little pattern of notes repeated like this:

Ours not to reason why, ours just to do or die.

Then that pattern is repeated one tone higher, like this:

Good fighting men are we, we serve his Majesty.



Right. I'll sing from the beginning down to 'Majesty' with the accompaniment this time. Listen first, so that you're able to join in next time.

*Ours not to reason why, ours just to do or die.
Good fighting men are we, we serve his Majesty.*

Okay - your turn. The song doesn't begin on the first beat of the bar, but just after the beat. So come in singing after you hear me count '3, 4, 1'. Here we go. 3, 4, 1.

*Ours not to reason why, ours just to do or die.
Good fighting men are we, we serve his Majesty.*

Good. Now listen to the next line where we'll hear that same note pattern again, higher still:

And with the pipe and drum, the rebel army comes.

And then to finish, a different little pattern:

They will not pass, they will not pass

So listen now as I sing these two lines from 'And with the pipe and drum' to the end:

*And with the pipe and drum, the rebel army comes
They will not pass, they will not pass*

Your turn now - again after a count of '3, 4, 1'. 3, 4, 1.

*And with the pipe and drum, the rebel army comes.
They will not pass, they will not pass.*

Right - well you've sung the whole verse now and I think we're ready to try it right through. After I count you in. 3, 4, 1.



*Ours not to reason why, ours just to do or die.
Good fighting men are we, we serve his Majesty.
And with the pipe and drum, the rebel army comes.
They will not pass, they will not pass.*

Okay. Let's go straight on to Verse 2, which is sung by the rebel army to exactly the same music. Listen as I sing it through...

*With sword and shield in hand, we march across the land.
We hear the trumpets sound, we come to take the crown.
Our cause is just and right, prepare to stand and fight.
You will not pass, you will not pass.*

If you look at the words in that verse, you will see that most words end on consonants. That's letters like 'd' and 't'...in words like 'sword', 'hand', 'right' and 'fight' and several others. It's really important to sound the endings of these words. Your turn - so let's see how you get on. Wait until I count you in. 3, 4, 1.

*With sword and shield in hand, we march across the land.
We hear the trumpets sound, we come to take the crown.
Our cause is just and right, prepare to stand and fight.
You will not pass, you will not pass.*

Right. Now, as I said earlier, our songs for **Macbeth** are going to feature plenty of raps. Rap is a song-style where the words are spoken not sung. And the rap in this song is a very short one - just to give you a flavour of what's to come. Have a listen.

You know we fight the armies all across the land, with a shield of hope and a sword in hand.

Look carefully at the words and you'll see that a few words have been underlined. The words 'fight', the syllable 'cross' of 'across', also 'shield' and 'sword'. These are the most important words - the words to be made louder or accented as we say in music. Listen again as I say the words.



You know we fight the armies all across the land, with a shield of hope and a sword in hand.

You say the rap this time, accenting the important words. Come in after 4, with me. 1, 2, 3, 4.

You know we fight the armies all across the land, with a shield of hope and a sword in hand.

Good, once more, up to speed this time, after '4'. 1, 2, 3, 4.

You know we fight the armies all across the land, with a shield of hope and a sword in hand.

Good. Now split into your two groups. Group 1 - you're going to say the whole rap. And Group 2 you're going to shout out just the underlined words. After 4. 1, 2, 3, 4...

You know we fight the armies all across the land, with a shield of hope and a sword in hand.

Good. Let's recap on all we've done so far. There are two sides to the battle, the King's loyal army and the rebels. The King's army sing Verse 1 and the rebels Verse 2 - and you can try both groups singing a verse each...or you might want to take it in turns to sing each line - it's up to you. The rap comes between Verses 1 and 2 and, for now, we'll all do the rap. Now, if ever there's a song that needs energy it's this one, so make sure you're all standing up to sing the two verses...and really go for it. Wait for the count-in. 3, 4, 1.

*Ours not to reason why, ours just to do or die.
Good fighting men are we, we serve his Majesty.
And with the pipe and drum, the rebel army comes.
They will not pass, they will not pass.*

You know we fight the armies all across the land with a shield of hope and a sword in hand...



*With sword and shield in hand, we march across the land.
We hear the trumpets sound, we come to take the crown.
Our cause is just and right, prepare to stand and fight.
You will not pass, you will not pass.*

OK we've learnt Verses 1 and 2 so now's a good time to take a break for part of the story...or if you want to carry on to the end of the song keep listening...

Now, we're going to learn the middle section of the song. It's very straightforward: as you listen to me singing it, see if you notice anything about the two lines of music I'm singing. I'll begin with the words 'Now let the battle begin'.

*Now let the battle begin.
Now let the battle begin.*

The two lines are sung to almost exactly the same music - only the last note is different. Listen once more.

*Now let the battle begin.
Now let the battle begin.*

Right, now you try and like before, wait until I count you in, '3, 4, 1'. 3, 4, 1.

*Now let the battle begin.
Now let the battle begin.*

Good. Following the middle of the song there's an Instrumental section for the two sides on the battlefield to play some rhythms. Once you're feeling confident you can try out adding some percussion instruments, but for now we'll use body percussion - first knee slaps...and hand claps... So make sure you're in a position to be able to do that. Listen out for a bass drum representing the knee slaps and a cymbal for hand claps. I'll go first. The speed is: 1, 2, 3, 4. I'll slap and clap a two-bar phrase and you join in the second time. But wait until I finish my two bars first. Ready?



Sonic battle - song tutorial

INSTRUMENTAL BOOM SHH BOOM BOOM SHH
BOOM SHH READY AND...

*BOOM SHH BOOM BOOM SHH
BOOM SHH BOOM BOOM SHH*

Just to make sure, let's do that again with the music. I'll go first...

BOOM SHH BOOM BOOM SHH
BOOM SHH READY AND...

*BOOM SHH BOOM BOOM SHH
BOOM SHH BOOM BOOM SHH*

Good. Now we're going to take it in turns. Group 1 - you start the two-bar phrase...and then Group 2 you answer with the next two-bar phrase. Are you ready? After 4. 1, 2, 3, 4.

INSTRUMENTAL Group 2: 3, 4 -

OK. Now the battle is heating up. Group 1 plays the first two bars. And Group 2 plays the next two. Like we've just done. Then Group 1 plays the next bar and Group 2 the bar after that. Making 6 in all - two for Group 1, two for Group 2, one for Group 1, one for Group 2. Let's try that now. I'll help you as you play. 1, 2, 3, 4 -

INSTRUMENTAL Group 2: 3, 4 -

Back to Group 1: 3, 4 -

Group 2: 3, 4 -

Good. You're doing really well so far. Now you've done six bars so we've only got two more to go - bars 7 and 8.



On the second to last one - bar 7 - both groups play our normal rhythm, but all together. And then on our final bar you're going to do four knee slaps...and four hand claps. So those last two bars should sound like this:

BOOM SHH BOOM BOOM SHH
BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM SHH SHH SHH SHH

Got it? So let's try those two bars together? I'll count you in. 1, 2, 3, 4.

That bit really does give the effect of a battle. Let's see how you get on putting the whole instrumental together. Wait for a count-in.

INSTRUMENTAL Group 2: 3, 4 -

Back to Group 1: 3, 4 -

Group 2 -

And together -

BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM SHH SHH SHH SHH

Well done! I hope you managed to keep in time and play together!

Right, you've worked very hard on our 'Sonic battle' and now you should be ready to try it out all the way through, joining in with either the full-vocal version of the song - or just the backing track if you're feeling really confident. When you do, you could try adding some percussion instruments of your own to the instrumental, to make it even more battle like. And make sure you know which words your group is singing: King's Army or Rebels – including for the repeat of Verse 1 which comes after the instrumental. Until the next time – bye!

