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Articulation

This pack explores articulation in Laura Shigihara's Grasswalk.

Learners will:

- Recognise and identify staccato sounds
- Recognise and identify legato sounds
- Compare and respond to staccato and legato sounds
- Compose motifs to deepen their understanding

Contents:

- Listening Activity - Staccato
- Listening Activity - Legato
- Movement Activity - Comparing and Responding
- Composition Activity - Staccato and Legato Themes

Suggestions for adaptations and extensions are included within this document. Please tailor these activities to improve accessibility and engagement for the people you are working with. You can work through the activities in order or pick your favourite to focus on. Many of these activities can be done one-to-one, in small groups, or in larger classes.

These resources were created by [Drake Music Scotland](#). We use [Figurenotes](#) to support learning. To find out more visit [Figurenotes.org](#). We'd love you to get in touch for more discussion and ideas. Email Figurenotes@DrakeMusicScotland.org or call 0131 659 4766.

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Listening Activity - Staccato Sounds

In this activity we will identify and discuss staccato sounds, making connections to imagery and similar sounds.

Suggested excerpt for listening: Pizzicato strings at bar 25

Explain that we are listening out for short, separated sounds. These are sounds that aren't smooth and connected, but are short and spiky. Explain that the word 'staccato' is the label we use for these sounds in music. You can compare them to smooth, connected sounds using the listening activity for legato sounds.

Discussion:

- Can you hear sounds that are short and separated?
- What do these sounds make you think of? Use drawings and words to keep a class record of this on the board or paper.

Extension:

There is a flashcard on the next page to show the word staccato with relevant imagery. Ask your learners to create their own poster with all the things that come to mind for staccato sounds. These can be used in a display or as flashcards to raise/point to in a seated version of the movement activity later in the pack.

Creating Sounds:

Demonstrate some staccato sounds using your body. For example, clap, stomp, tap, shout. Ask the class to come up with their own.

Extension:

Divide the class up into small groups or individuals. Each group chooses their own signature staccato sound. Create a pulse using a drum or stomping together. When the conductor points to a group, they switch to doing the pulse on their signature staccato sound. You can get learners to take control and become the conductor. You can also use instruments for this activity.

You can take this further by introducing rhythms. Example rhythms can be found on the page titled 'Suggestions for Limited Palettes'

Legato - short and separated



Articulation

Listening Activity - Legato Sounds

In this activity we will identify and discuss legato sounds, making connections to imagery and similar sounds.

Suggested excerpt for listening: Oboe line at rehearsal mark A

Explain that we are listening out for smooth, connected sounds. Explain that the word 'legato' is the label we use for these sounds in music. You can compare them to short, separated sounds using the listening activity for staccato sounds.

Discussion:

- Can you hear sounds that are smooth and connected?
- What do these sounds make you think of? Use drawings and words to keep a class record of this on the board or paper.

Extension:

There is a flashcard on the next page to show the word legato with relevant imagery. Ask your learners to create their own posters with all the things that come to mind for legato sounds. These can be used in a display or as flashcards to raise/point to in a seated version of the movement activity later in the pack.

Creating Sounds:

Demonstrate some legato sounds using your voice. For example, singing a series of notes in one breath using an 'aah' sound. Ask the learners to repeat back what they hear, like a call and response. Ask them to come up with their own. You can also use an instrument for this. The important thing is to keep the notes smooth and connected.

Extension:

We are going to pass a legato sound around the group. One person starts their sound, for example an 'ooh' sound. They point to or touch the shoulder of the person next to them. This person starts the ooh sound and passes it to the next person. You cannot stop your sound until the next person has begun. How smooth can you pass the sound around the group? This also works well with an action, such as a Mexican Wave.

You can take this further by introducing rhythms. Example rhythms can be found on the page titled 'Suggestions for Limited Palettes' The important thing is to keep the notes smooth and connected.

Legato - smooth and connected



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Movement Activity

In this activity we will identify, and respond to, staccato and legato sounds. You will need to explain these if you have not done the listening activities above.

You can use the supporting audio track for this activity. Alternatively use an instrument, body percussion, or vocal sounds. The important thing is to switch between staccato and legato sounds.

Explain to your learners that they need to listen to the sounds carefully. There will be staccato sounds (short and spiky sounding) and legato sounds (smooth and connected).

When they hear a staccato sound they need to move in a way that reflects the sound. For example, jumping, jerky arm movements, moving like a robot.

When they hear a legato sound they need to move in a way that reflects the sound. For example, gliding, twirling, flowing movements.

The sounds will change throughout the music and they must respond to what they hear.

Adaptations:

An adaptation for limited mobility or limited classroom space is to do a seated version of this activity. You can use any part of your body to create the movements or actions.

Alternatively, you could hold up the corresponding flashcard, point to the flashcard, or make a vocal sound reflecting what you're hearing. Switches or instruments can also be useful in this activity.

Use vocal and physical prompting to support the use of the flashcards or in place of them.

Extension:

Members of the group can be the leader and create different sounds for the group to respond to. This could be through vocal sounds or an instrument.

Articulation

Composition Activity

In this activity we will create staccato and legato compositions. You will need to explain these concepts if you have not done the listening or movement activities above.

Now we know about staccato and legato sounds, we can use them to create some music. We can explore the garden aspect of the Plants vs Zombies game in this activity.

Discuss the things in a garden that might make staccato sounds, such as:

- birds pecking
- raindrops falling
- spiky plants
- sharp gravel

Discuss the things in a garden that might make legato sounds, such as:

- birds soaring
- plants slowly growing
- trees swaying in the wind
- worms wiggling

Choose 2 contrasting ideas from your discussion. Create a short musical idea for each. One must use staccato sounds, the other must use legato. You can use the blank Figurenotes bars on the accompanying worksheet to write your composition down. Alternatively you can use a graphic score, standard notation, or your memory.

Setting boundaries and limitations can really help with 'blank page anxiety' when composing. Set a palette of notes, note values, rhythms, etc. to choose from. Then allow extension and expression from there. Suggestions for limited palettes are included on the next page.

Extension:

Create game characters based on staccato and legato sounds. Your compositions can become themes for them in a game. Give your characters names and draw pictures of them, maybe even 'stats' for what they do best. For example, your staccato character might be called Spike and be really good at jumping and hopping. Your legato character might be called Flow and be really good at making friends or flying.

Suggestions for Limited Palettes

Use these ideas to avoid 'blank page anxiety' and provide a starting point for composition.

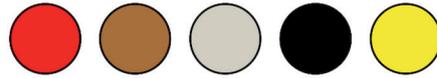
Set a limited length, such as 4 bars. Multiples of 4 is usually the best way to go.

Remember that you don't necessarily have to use the note names or terms such as 'crotchet'. You can use the visual nature of Figurenotes to show this information, use colour names, or phrases like 'one beat note'. Whatever suits your learners best.

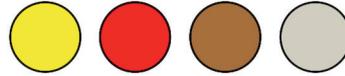
Pitch:

Using pentatonic scales can make a composition sound harmonious. You can present these in Figurenotes notation. Below are some examples of successful limited note palettes.

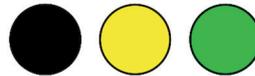
C major pentatonic: C D E G A



A C D E - Yellow, Red, Brown, Grey



G A B - Black, Yellow, Green



Rhythm:

Limiting note duration makes it easier to compose rhythms, but you can also provide ready-made rhythmic ideas for the learner to assign pitch to.

Only use crotchets and quavers

Only use 2 types of note from this list: Minims, Crotchets, Quavers.

