

Samba

Year 6

Spring 2

Unit Overview

Lesson One - An Introduction to Samba

- To begin the first lesson, ask the children to grab a whiteboard and pen and write down as many genres of music as they can. If they need a little help give them a few hints like playing an electric (air) guitar for 'Rock' or pretending to be Bob Marley singing 'We're Jammin' for 'Reggae'. There are many different style but see how many they can name in 2 minutes.
- When the children have finished briefly mention the variety different styles of music across the world: Rock, Reggae, Soul, Jazz, Pop, Hip-Hop, Garage, Grunge, Indie, Grime, Ballad, Rap, Blues, Samba, Bhangra, Salsa, Tango, Folk, Punk, Rhythm and Blues, Country etc.
- In this scheme we are going to explore 'Samba' music. Samba music is a style of music that has an Afro-Brazilian origin. It has characteristic rhythmic patterns that overlap, called polyrhythms. The music has high energy and is often used for Carnivals and Festivals to bring a feel-good factor to its audience.
- Let the children see the 'Samba Introduction' video. In this video we are introduced to a 12 year old boy called Jonas. He plays in a Samba band that meet regularly and perform in Carnivals throughout the year. When the video has finished ask the children some questions about it. Where does Jonas live? Who does he live with? What is the Samba school called? What instruments does Jonas play? How does Jonas feel when he plays?
- Next the children are going to see polyrhythms in action. Polyrhythms are multiple different rhythmic patterns playing simultaneously. It is not easy to keep your rhythm going while lots of other different rhythms are playing around you. This video shows the concentration you need to be a Samba player. Let the children watch it and see if they can concentrate on one pattern (one pair of coloured gloves) all the way through.
- To finish the lesson, hand out as many Agogos as you have access to. Let the children on the agogo try and play along with the 'Agogo Only' video. We will continue this in more detail in the next lesson, this is just a little taster.

Lesson Two – Polyrhythms

- We are now going to continue the work on Polyrhythm that we started last week.
- The three sets instruments we will need are Agogos, Guiros and Drums/Tambourines. Working in groups of 3 to 4 hand out the instruments. Let each group follow their part first of all, before combining them. This will allow them a little practice time. The Bass Drum Part is the easiest for differentiation purposes.
- When the children have had a go using the separate part video, let them try playing together.
- Make sure every child has had a go at playing an instrument along with the Samba Polyrhythms video.
- The next stage is 'Layering'. Layering is an important part of music in every genre. We bring in an instrument one at a time and build the sound. This happens on all sorts of popular music we listen to.
- Today we will start our layering practice with clapping. Split the class into 5 groups as the 'Layering Exercise' video says. Each group will follow a line on the rhythm grid and play to the beat of the bouncing blue ball.
- Next, each group will be assigned an instrument. I have tried to keep the instruments fairly simple here and use percussion that most schools will have. If you don't have the exact instrument, don't panic. Look for something suitable for the children to play.
- Let the class have a go with the layering exercise in full. This is NOT a Samba exercise yet but a warm-up to prepare for Samba layering in the next lesson.

Lesson Three – Layering

- Today the children will focus Samba layering. This is a very important technique in Samba Music and one where the levels on the child's concentration will be tested.
- Let the children see the 'Samba Layering Exercise' video. See if then can maintain focus one ONE of the instrument lines.
- Play the video again and ask the children to try and clap ONE of the line continuously. Can they keep their part going?
- Next, hand out two of each instrument. You should have 10 players altogether.
 - 2 x Drums
 - 2 x Agogo
 - 2 x Guiro
 - 2 x Maracas
 - 2 x Tambourine

I have created a separate video for each part to make it easier. So, let each group practice their part 'solo' first. Once each group has played their solo video, let all 10 children try and play together, using the initial 'Samba Layering Exercise' video.

Repeat this so all of the class have had a go.

When you have tried the video with each child, let them try a different instrument. Repeat the exercise with children playing their new instrument.

Lesson Four – Changing Rhythms – The Samba Whistle

- In Samba music, the whistle is a way of attracting the players attention, to let them know that the rhythmic patten they are playing is about to change. Today will be play are rhythm grid from the previous lesson, however, this time the rhythm will change for each of the player, during the music. How quickly can they realise the change and play the new pattern?
- Once each child has had a go with the 'Changing Rhythm' video, ask groups of 5 to come to the front and play, each child with a different instrument.
- This lesson can be a focus on performance and audience. After each performance let the audience feedback on what they thought of each performance. Giving constructive criticism.
- To finish the lesson, ask the children how they would describe Samba music to someone who had never heard of it. This is a solid way of testing that they understand the background and techniques used in Samba. You are looking out for answers such as:
 - It is a form of music based in Brazil.
 - It is used in Colourful, energetic carnivals.
 - It uses a mix of rhythms called polyrhythms.
 - Instruments used include Agogos, drums, tambourines, guiros.
 - Players have to listen for the Samba whistle to know when to change rhythmic pattern.

Lesson Five – Noodle Drumming

- In this lesson the children will learn a collection of Samba rhythms on the Noodle Drums.
- Firstly, make sure you have enough Pool Noodles for around 6/10 children. I wouldn't do anymore than that at a time because of noise! When it comes to the Noodles themselves split a normal size noodle into 3. This will normally give you the perfect size. So, with 6 normal size Noodles you'll get 18 Noodle Drum sticks! But you can be as cautious or as adventurous as you like! When it comes to the other children in the class who are watching, what I like to do is give those children mini Noodles to use. I made these by simply finding some thinner foam pipe and cutting them into little drums sticks they can use on the table. They make effective practice drum-sticks (less noisy and not as big!).
- Split the class into 3 groups (Blue, Turquoise and Red) and let each group practice their part before combining them all together.

- This piece of music is at a fast tempo so it will be a good indicator of where the children are with regards to keeping rhythmic patterns in time with music. The easier track to follow is the Turquoise with the Blue and Red being slightly harder. So maybe split your group according to ability.
- In the second part of the lesson, allow children to come up in groups of 3. One following the Turquoise pattern, one the blue and one the red. Are they able to keep their beat, as the other two players play completely different rhythms?

Lesson Six – Composing Samba Patterns

- In this final lesson the children are going to try creating their own Samba patterns.
- Firstly, encourage the children to work in groups of 3 to 4. In their groups they must each compose a simple body percussion rhythm. Each of the rhythms must be different but they play them simultaneously. For example
 - Player 1 – Leg tap, leg tap, clap (repeat on a loop)
 - Player 2 – Stamp, stamp, click, click, click
 - Player 3 – Clap, clap, clap, clap (quick claps) Stamp, stamp.

When the groups have finished body percussion work, they can move onto instrumental percussion.

Each player uses a different instrument. For example:

- Player 1 – Agogo
- Player 2 – Guiro
- Player 3 – Drum

The children must create rhythms that are easy to remember and repeat. I would suggest using a 4 beat pattern. This keeps things simple. Ask one of the children to be the conductor and keep a 4 count. The pattern can only last for 4 beats. And then repeat again.

For example, the Agogo player might play:

1 2 3 4
 'high low high-high low'. And keep repeating this pattern.

The drum might keep the main beat:

1 2 3 4
 Tap Tap Tap Tap

The key concept to understand here is polyrhythm. Mixing 3 or 4 different rhythms together. How well can the children keep their rhythm going amongst all other rhythms.