

Ukulele

Year 5 Summer 1

Unit Overview

Lesson One - An Introduction to the Ukulele

- Tuning the Ukulele. This is an extremely important exercise to carry out before each Ukulele lesson. For a non-specialist it can be a bit daunting, so for teachers it is best to practice this on your own first before attempting it with the children.
- Watch the 'Tuning Your Ukulele' video to see how it is best done. If you would rather, tune the ukuleles yourself. However, if you have children who feel confident with doing this, pick a few tuners to do this with you before each lesson. They will need to have a good ear and not twist the pegs too quickly as this can snap the string.
- Ask the children to hold the Ukuleles at a 90 Degree angle against their tummy. Strings facing out. Ukuleles are tuned for Right Handed playing. To tune for Left Handed players the strings are tuned the opposite way around. Right handed players should hold the Ukulele with the Headstock facing on their left side. Left hand players, the opposite way. Ask them to point it towards the appropriate wall or window.
- Greedy Cats Eat Anything. The strings on the Ukulele are G C E A. On the video I show how this sounds and looks for the layer. Ask the children to play along with Greedy Cats Eat Anything and let them know that the reason we use those words is so we can learn the string names.
- C and F Chords. In the first part of this scheme the children will learn some simple Ukulele chords. This will enable them to play along with a number of different songs as they progress.
- Watch the 'C and F Chord' video. Ask the children to watch carefully and try and play along with the video.
- The important thing to look out for is good posture (sitting up straight and making sure the Ukulele is set in the correct position). Placing the child's thumb on the neck of the Ukulele and lowering the wrist, meaning that they can wrap their fingers around to get to the correct string.
- C and F Play along. Let the children have a go with strumming along to the 'C and F' play along video. It will take time for the children to be able to transition quickly, but practice makes perfect.

Lesson Two – Playing C F and Am Chords

- Recap the work the children did on the Ukulele in the last lesson.
- Once again, make sure the Ukuleles are in tune and the children are holding them correctly.
- Play along through the C and F practice video and then the C and F play along video. Make sure the children are placing their fingers in the correct position and allow time for the children to make sure they can change between C and F chord quickly.
- The children will learn A Minor Chord. The children may notice that this Chord has a similarity to F Major Chord. Once they have practiced let them have a go with the transition from F to A Minor.
- Now let the children try the Play Along for C F and A Minor.

Lesson Three – C Am F and G7

- Today the children will learn a 4th chord. The chord of G7. This is a trickier chord to learn as it uses 3 fingers at once.
- Watch the 'G7 Tutorial'. Let the children have a go with the new chord.
- Now play the 'C Am F and G7 Chord' play along.
- When you feel the children are confident enough they can play along with the 'Ukulele Chord Practice' video. The children must play the correct chord as the cartoon child lands on the Ukulele Chord Tab.

- The children can then play along with the Ukulaliens versions that follow.

Lesson Four and Five – Playing Along on the Ukulele to accompany famous songs

- The children will now have a clear understanding of the 4 main Ukulele Chords. The chords they have practiced will allow them to play a variety of well-known songs.
- Over the next couple of lessons, allow the children to play along with The Wellerman, Count on Me, Drops of Jupiter and By Christmas Eve. The children could also have a go with 'Sneeks and Geeks' written by a Year 6 student Skye Bishop.

Lesson Six – I've Got Rhythm

- Today, the children are going to learn how you play the Ukulele by picking rather than strumming. Picking is when you play one string and note at a time. In the last 5 lessons, we have strummed all four strings at once. This is more of a challenge so make sure the children are really focusing on playing the correct string and placing their left-hand fingers in the correct place, as shown on the tutorial.
- Play the 'I Got Rhythm Tutorial' video. Make sure you pause it as you go along to allow the children time to successfully master each level before they move on.
- For differentiation, split the group into abilities and let them move forward at their own pace.
- When the children feel ready you can play the 'I Got Rhythm Play Through' video for the class to have a go at.