

Conductor

Year 1

Summer 2

Unit Overview

Lesson One – Introduction to a Conductor

- In this scheme the children will learn about the job of a Conductor in music. Play the 'Introduction' video. This shows the children some examples of a Conductor in action and also acts as a short tutorial. The children learn 6 simple 'Conductor' gestures that are going to be needed for all of the videos in this scheme. The actions for 'Go' - 'Stop' - 'Louder' - 'Softer' - 'Faster' - 'Slower'.
- When the video has finished ask some of the children to show the various gestures we are going to need, to check that they had fully understood the task.
- Play the 'Start and Stop' video for the children. This will show the Conductor in action and they will get a feel for the beat of the music. Let's start by clapping in time. Whenever the Conductor gestures to 'Stop' make sure the children stop immediately. When the Conductor gestures to 'Start' they begin again. When the music is complete, have another go, however, this time the children can choose their own body percussion to play. For example clicks, leg taps, stamps etc.
- Now we move onto instruments. Pass percussion instruments around the class. I find it best to hand out 6/10 at a time rather than to the full class! So maybe practice with a table at a time. Any simple percussion instruments will go and there are some examples on the videos that follow. Drums, Tambourines, Guiros, Woodblocks, Agogos, Cabasas, Maracas, Triangles etc. Let the children have a go with the 'Start Stop With Instruments' video. Who can keep in time and stop and start quickly as the Conductor instructs.
- To finish the lessons talk about the importance of gesture. Notice how the Conductor doesn't need to speak at all. They only use gesture and expression to guide the players. Can the children think of anything they could do without using words that can communicate something to the class?

Lesson Two – Tempo - Faster and Slower and Child Conducting

- Recap the work from the previous lesson on the Conductor. What is a Conductors role in music? Why is gesture so important? What gestures did we learn last week and what do they mean?
- Play the 'Faster – Slower with Instruments' video. As we did last week, we are now going to provide the children with some percussion instruments and let them play along. This time watch out for the Conductor changing the 'Tempo'. 'Tempo' means the speed of the music. The children must also watch out for the 'start' sign at the beginning, the 'stop' sign at the end and also the 'normal speed' sign which is when the Conductor waves his arms to the beat of the music.
- Next, we will invite children to the front of the class to conduct using 'Start' 'Stop' 'Faster' and 'Slower'. You will not need music or a video for this. This can be achieved simply by children playing instruments and watching for the Conductors gestures. This is also a good opportunity to assess the children's ability to Conduct and to Watch and Play. Those without instruments are still part of the exercise as they can play body percussion to join in.

Lesson Three – Dynamics – Louder and Softer and All Disciplines

- Recap the work from the previous lessons on the Conductor. What gestures have we used and how do they help the players?

- Today we will explore Dynamics and then put all of the Conductor disciplines together.
- Firstly, show the children the 'Start/Stop and Loud/Quiet' video. Once the children understand, hand out percussion instruments to class tables, one at a time and let them have a go.
- Next, we will try playing along to all of the gestures. So, the children have to be aware that there will be lots of different gestures to watch and respond to. How quickly can the children alter the way they're playing in time with the music and the Conductor?
- As we did in the previous lesson, let the children have a go with Conducting, but this time using all available gestures. As each child comes up, let's see what kind of Conductor they are. Do they like loud and fast music? Do they prefer their music to be softer and slower? Or do they like music with plenty of variety? All of these questions can be explored as each child comes to the front. Allow different players to play each time to make sure everyone gets a fair go at playing and conducting.

Lesson Four – Conducting Separate families of instruments

- In this lesson the children will learn how instruments can be separated into family groups. There is a whole variety of possible groupings for percussion but today we are putting instruments into the following groups:
 - **Scrapers**
 - **Shakers**
 - **Drums and Tambourines**
 - **Metal Instruments**

Some instruments can come under two or more of the categories, however, just to simplify things let's stick with the following:

- **Scrapers** – Guiros, Wooden Agogos and Clatterillars
- **Shakers** – Maracas, Cabasas and Rainsticks
- **Drums and Tambourines**
- **Metal Instruments** – Agogos, Triangles and Sleigh bells

Next, split the class into the four colour groups shown on the screen; Red, Blue, Green and Yellow. Show the class the final video on the webpage. Ask if the children can see what is happening. Here, the Conductor is asking one group at a time to start playing. Once they start, they don't stop until asked to do so. Also, if the conductor asks the specific group to change Tempo or Dynamic only that group should do so. The important thing here is that each group is separate, so they must watch carefully to see when their colour is gestured to.

This is more complex so will take a little time to perfect. Give the children plenty of opportunity and perhaps bring four children up, one from each group, to show their work.

Further Lessons.

To finish the module children could have a go with Conducting separate groups, as we did in the final video. Make sure they are clear with their gestures and use all of the different musical elements such as tempo and dynamic changes to suit the mood they are looking for.

Children could draw and colour a picture of a Conductor in action.