

Lesson plan: Nature's Orchestra

Learning objective:

To explore the sounds that can be found in a natural environment.

Resources required

- Seat mats
- Outdoor clothing if necessary
- A quiet area outdoors
- Suitable natural items to use
- Paper for maps if using
- Bird mics/apps to use for bird song if no birds around!

Adult Support

- Teacher leading activity; adults to prompt children who may feel shy or out of ideas, and also to supervise behaviour.
- Pupils for whom sensory stimulation is a problem may want to do this on a one-to-one basis, with adult support.

Follow up activities

- Use this activity as a starting point to learn about animal calls, particularly birds, and do some birdwatching!
- Develop the soundscape further by using real instruments to imitate the natural orchestra in a whole-class performance
- Hold an outdoor performance of 'Nature's Orchestra' for parents and schoolmates
- Record the orchestral performance, and turn it into a multi-sensory experience by layering with words and movements

Duration

30 minutes+

Theme

Nature

Subject focus

Music

Age group

All KS2

Learning outcomes (differentiated)

- To investigate and recognise sounds in a natural environment
- To imitate sounds using pupils' own bodies and found objects
- To work cooperatively
- To perform an original work
- To compose an original piece

MUST: Identify wildlife noises and attempt to imitate them.

SHOULD: Experiment with pitch and timbre

COULD: Compose their own piece.

Keywords

orchestra, music, conduct, soundscape, habitat, nature, man-made, noise pollution, beat, rhythm, crescendo, climax, composition

Starter

Take pupils outside, preferably to a quiet area with little man-made noise pollution, and ask them to sit/lie quietly with their eyes shut, and listen to the sounds around them for one minute. (Some pupils may struggle- discuss expectations beforehand).

- Questioning: what did you hear? How many different sounds did you pick out? Can you name any of them?

This could be extended and turned into a 'sound map'. Pupils to close their eyes and listen, but afterwards, they are given a piece of paper. They mark out the area, and draw a symbol representing what they heard in the approximately accurate location (eg a bird, a stream, a wind graphic to represent rustling leaves). They then swap maps with a partner, and their partner needs to try and find the sounds using the visual directions given by the map! Play and discuss as a class.

Main activity

Listen again, but before you do, introduce Nature's Orchestra! Encourage pupils to be conductors in charge of the orchestra, leading the 'music' by moving their hands along with the sounds that rise and fall. Pupils then to make their own orchestral soundscape by producing the sounds themselves. Explain that pupils can use their bodies, found and natural objects to make their music. Encourage one person to start up a regular, repeated beat. Gradually, add in more and more sounds until everyone is involved and the piece reaches a crescendo. It is up to the teacher/conductor how challenging this activity can be! If you wish to push pupils, introduce musical terminology such as *crescendo* and *forte*. Consider the following adaptations:

- You could group students into sections eg: rhythm, animal sounds, leaves scrunches, bird calls, etc. These sections could be brought in together, or dropped out.
- You could even have a go at performing in the round!
- If possible, record the group, so they could play it back and watch their performance! Even better if they could perform to another class.

Plenary

Could be done at the end, or through mini plenaries throughout.

About natural sounds:

- What animals made the noises?
- How did this activity make you feel?
- What was your favourite noise?
- Could you hear any man-made sounds?
- Would it be better if there were none of these- should we ban them?

About the soundscape:

- Whose sounds did you particularly like, and why?
- Did anybody recognise any sounds in particular?
- How would you describe this music? How did it make you feel?
- How could we improve our orchestral composition?

Extension tasks

- Children could work in pairs or smaller groups to create their own compositions
- They could add in movement or gesture at appropriate times
- Experiment with pitch, timbre, volume, etc.
- Recreate wildlife noise, particularly bird calls, with musical instruments- then get the rest of the class to identify which birds have called!

Health and safety considerations

- Slips, trips and falls in the area chosen
- Wildlife- eg plants, insects- that could prove dangerous
- Weather concerns
- Allergies
- Additional behavioural needs

Reflective notes

Curriculum links

Music

- Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
- Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts
- Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the inter-related dimensions of music

Science (Notes and Guidance)

- Pupils should use the local environment ... to identify and study plants and animals in their habitat.

Physical Education

- Take part in outdoor and adventurous activity challenges both individually and within a team