

Music Makers: Rhythm, Melody & Movement

45 min · Pre-K – 8th · After School · Teacher: Karla Kvam

Instructions: This lesson plan is your starting point — feel free to edit, rearrange, or customize it to fit your teaching style and your students' needs! These notes are yours. They will not be published anywhere.

Topics Covered

Melodic patterns · Rhythm and beat · Musical movement · Call and response · Scale exploration · Body percussion

Lesson Plan

1. Welcome & Slide Whistle Warm-Up (8 min)

- Greet students in a circle and pass out slide whistles (or have them grab their assigned one)
- Demonstrate high vs. low sounds by sliding the whistle up and down while saying 'rocket ship' (up) and 'waterfall' (down)
- Lead students in copycat patterns: teacher plays a 3-note slide pattern, students echo it back together
- Play 'Slide Whistle Simon Says' where students only play when you say the magic word ('music!') before the pattern

2. Gallop All Around – 5 Note Scale (12 min)

- Introduce the 5-note scale (C-D-E-F-G or do-re-mi-fa-sol) using hand signs or xylophone demonstration
- Sing 'Gallop All Around' together: 'Gallop, gallop all around, up and down we go, five little notes are all we need, listen as they flow'
- Divide class into two groups: half gallops in a circle while half plays the 5-note scale on xylophones/bells (then switch)
- Have students create their own 5-note melodies using only these notes and share with a partner

3. On My Toe There is a Flea (10 min)

- Teach the song verse by verse with body movements: 'On my toe there is a flea (point to toe), now he's climbing up on me (walk fingers up body), past my tummy, past my nose (touch each), on my head where my hair grows (pat head)'
- Add rhythm instruments: students tap rhythm sticks or claves on the beat while singing
- Play the song at different tempos (slow like a sloth, fast like a cheetah) and have students adjust their movements
- Invite volunteers to be the 'conductor' who decides the tempo for the next round

4. Circle Mirroring Patterns (10 min)

- Sit or stand in a circle; teacher demonstrates a 4-beat body percussion pattern (clap-clap-stomp-stomp)
- Students mirror the pattern back exactly; gradually increase complexity (snap-clap-thigh-stomp)
- Pass the pattern around the circle: each student creates their own 4-beat pattern for the group to mirror
- Add vocal sounds to patterns (humming, clicking, whistling) for students ready for a challenge

5. Closing Jam & Reflection (5 min)

- Play a collaborative 'sound circle': each student adds one sound or note to create a layered group composition
- Ask 2–3 students to share their favorite part of today's music exploration
- Preview next week's activity in one exciting sentence
- End with a unison clap pattern: everyone claps the 'goodbye rhythm' together (clap-clap-rest-clap)

Materials Checklist

- ☐ Slide whistles (1 per student, or share in pairs)
- ☐ Xylophones or resonator bells (C-D-E-F-G notes, enough for half the class)
- ☐ Rhythm sticks or claves (1 pair per student)
- ☐ Hand sign chart for 5-note scale (poster or printed handouts)
- ☐ Small percussion instruments (tambourines, shakers, triangles - variety)
- ☐ Bluetooth speaker or device for playing music examples
- ☐ Visual tempo cards (pictures of animals: sloth, turtle, horse, cheetah)

Age Adaptations

Younger Kids: Pre-K to 1st graders: Use simpler 2-beat patterns instead of 4-beat for mirroring. Keep slide whistle patterns to just up/down movements. Use picture cards for 'On My Toe' lyrics. Allow more wiggle time and repeat

activities twice. Focus on gross motor movements (stomping, clapping) over fine motor (snapping).

Older Kids: 5th to 8th graders: Challenge them to create 8-beat body percussion patterns with syncopation. Introduce musical notation for the 5-note scale and have them write their melodies. Add harmonies to 'On My Toe' (split into two vocal parts). Incorporate music theory vocabulary (tempo, dynamics, pitch). Let them compose and teach a pattern to younger buddies.

Movement Break

Musical Statues Remix: Play upbeat music and students dance freely. When music stops, call out a musical term ('forte!' = big strong statue, 'piano!' = tiny gentle statue, 'staccato!' = jerky robot statue, 'legato!' = smooth flowing statue). Students freeze in that style until music resumes.

Bonus Activities

- Sound scavenger hunt: students explore the room finding objects that make interesting sounds when tapped, shaken, or scraped
- Compose a class song: write new lyrics to 'On My Toe' about a different animal or character
- Instrument charades: one student mimes playing an instrument while others guess which one
- Build a simple shaker using paper cups and dried beans, then add it to the closing jam

Series Outline (9 Weeks)

Week	Theme	Key Activities
1	Musical Foundations: Beat & Melody	Slide whistle introduction and high/low exploration, Learn 'Gallop All Around' with 5-note scale on xylophones, Introduce 'On My Toe There is a Flea' with movement
2	Rhythm Masters: Patterns & Pulse	Slide whistle pattern challenges (3-4 note sequences), Body percussion patterns in the circle, Add drum accompaniment to 'On My Toe' song
3	Dynamics & Expression	Slide whistle dynamics: loud/soft controlled playing, Sing and play 'Gallop' with volume variations (crescendo/decrescendo), Create expressive movements showing forte and piano
4	Tempo Explorers	Slide whistle speed challenges (slow glides vs. quick jumps), Play 'On My Toe' at 3 different tempos with appropriate movements, Tempo

Week	Theme	Key Activities
		relay: pass around tempo changes in mirror patterns
5	Melody Makers: Composition Basics	Create original slide whistle 'conversations' in pairs, Compose new melodies using the 5-note scale on instruments, Add a new verse to 'On My Toe' with student-created lyrics
6	Ensemble Building: Playing Together	Orchestrate 'Gallop All Around' with multiple instrument groups, Small group arrangements: assign different parts to different students, Conductor practice: students take turns leading tempo and dynamics
7	Musical Storytelling	Use slide whistles to create sound effects for a group story, Act out 'On My Toe' as a mini-musical with choreography, Create a soundscape using instruments to represent different scenes
8	Performance Rehearsal	Polish favorite songs and patterns from previous weeks, Create a performance sequence with smooth transitions, Practice performing for each other with audience etiquette
9	Celebration Concert & Reflection	Perform prepared pieces for families or other classes, Individual or small group showcases of original compositions, Musical reflection circle: share growth and favorite moments from the series



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