

La Bamba

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Summary

This is the tenth lesson from the Strumming Through The Americas ukulele course. Students will visit Mexico and learn about Son Jarocho and its associated history and traditions. They will learn the main lyrical refrain and chord accompaniment from “La Bamba” - a traditional song from the son jarocho tradition, made famous by the iconic Ritchie Valens. They will then perform the song as a group.

Objectives

- Locate Mexico and the Veracruz region on a map and relate it to their geographical location.
- Distinguish the important elements of the son jarocho musical style.
- Interpret a G7 chord diagram.
- Utilize a new chord (G7) in a new song and performance context.
- Incorporate lyrics into the chordal accompaniment of “La Bamba”.
- Develop their skills in collaboration through a group performance/practice exercise.

Materials

- Ukulele
- [Google Slides: La Bamba](#)
- [Mexico on the Map](#)
- [Map of Veracruz](#)
- [Son Jarocho Handout](#)
- [Culture: Mexico's Son Jarocho](#)
- [La Bamba - traditional style](#)
- [La Bamba - Ritchie Valens](#)
- [La Bamba Chords](#)
- [La Bamba Strumming](#)
- [La Bamba Lyrics](#)
- [S'Cool Sounds Padlet](#)
- Adaptive tools or chord changers for students with disabilities

Note: S'Cool Sounds lessons are for educational and informational use only. SCS highly recommends the use of [SafeShare](#) to watch media securely without advertisements, pop-ups, and/or unwanted [inappropriate] content when teaching young audiences.

Explore

1. Display the [Google Slides: La Bamba](#). Introduce the lesson by showing [Mexico on the Map](#). Ask: *Has anyone in the classroom today visited Mexico before? What is just above Mexico? (U.S.A!).* Explain to students that today they will visit a specific part of Mexico to learn about today's musical style and song (show [Veracruz](#) on the map).
2. Play the students [Culture: Mexico's Son Jarocho](#) (a short video). Remind the students to pay close attention to the sounds they are hearing, as well as the instruments they can see. After the video finishes, engage the students in a brief discussion. Ask: *Has anyone heard music like this before? Do some of the instruments look familiar, or similar to something you have seen before? There is a large instrument in the video that is also used in the Venezuelan joropo we learned about last week - what is it?*
3. Using the [Son Jarocho Handout](#), give students a brief background into the history of the son jarocho. Point out in particular the two string instruments often used in the music (*jarana jarocho* and *requinto jarocho*) - reminding students that there are so many instruments that look very similar to the ukulele, but each have a unique sound and history.
4. Connecting to "La Bamba" as discussed in the handout, play the students an excerpt of the two provided recordings. Begin with playing [La Bamba - traditional style](#), and then [La Bamba - Ritchie Valens](#). Ask: *Have you heard this song before? How does the second recording of "La Bamba", by Ritchie Valens, compare to the first? Are there any differences in the instruments used?* Tell students that in this lesson they will learn to play and sing the main refrain for "La Bamba"

Learn

1. Play the [La Bamba Chords](#) video for the students. Pause the video at 0:43 to allow the students to first practice the C and F chords used in the song. Once they are comfortable, resume the video from [0:43](#), where Mr. Juan will teach the students a variation on the G chord, G7. Pause the video at 1:10 so that the chord diagram for G7 is displayed. Allow the students extra time as necessary to familiarize themselves with the finger placement for the chord. Resuming from [1:10](#) will show the chord progression/cycle in full. As Mr. Juan states in the video, "La Bamba" uses the same chords as "Guantanamera", but with G7 replacing the G chord.
2. Once the students are comfortable with each of the chords individually, play the [La Bamba Strumming](#) video. Pause at 0:26 to allow time for the students to practice the chords (all using downstrokes) as necessary. Resume from [0:26](#) so that students can practice strumming the chords with Mr. Juan - repeating the video from the same point as necessary.
3. Play the [La Bamba Lyrics](#) video for the students. Have students put down the ukulele in this initial stage. Mr. Juan will teach them the lyrics and melody for the refrain, having them repeat each phrase after him. They will then have the opportunity to sing the refrain in its entirety, while Mr. Juan provides the chord accompaniment. Once the students are familiar with the lyrics and

melody - have them pick up the ukulele and practice incorporating the strumming while they sing.

Perform & Share

1. Put students into groups of four or five and have them practice the song together. Encourage collaboration, teamwork and showing patience for each other. After some allocated practice time, the student groups will then each perform the song for the class. Invite the groups to also share one fact about son jarocho that they learned in the lesson.
2. Create a video of the performances, and share via the [S'Cool Sounds Padlet](#).
3. Tell students in the next lesson they will visit the Dominican Republic.