

Unit 2 Lesson Plan Outline

Unit 2 Title

The Instruments of the Orchestra

Unit Structure

- Live Video Conferencing with an ACO musician (20-30 min)
- Classroom lesson delivered by classroom teacher exploring Unit 2 page on the website (approx. 45 min)
- Art activity: drawing instrument cartoons (approx. 45 min)

Student Objectives

By the end of this unit students should

- Know the four instrument families and at least one representative instrument per family.
- Be able to identify/describe instruments by sight and sound (at least violin, viola, cello, double bass)
- Define the words “conductor,” “timbre” and “composer.”
- Use adjectives to describe personality and character traits
- Use adjectives to describe timbre/sounds/instruments
- Identify the composer Benjamin Britten and his piece Young People’s Guide to the Orchestra

Classroom Lesson Strategies

- On the Unit 2 Classroom Lesson page of the website, look through the instrument families and discuss the properties of each family.
- Watch the YouTube video of the Young People’s Guide to the Orchestra
- Use the list of timings (located in In Detail) to point out families of instruments. Pick a few specific instruments to focus on. Pause/replay the video when necessary and discuss
 - Adjectives that describe the sound of the instrument
 - Comparisons between the sound/character of the instrument and that of a person or animal.

Classroom Art Activity

- Using the instruments chosen for discussion in the classroom lesson and based on the characteristics discussed, students will draw an instrument in a cartoon-like fashion.

Materials Needed

For Videoconferencing: Paper and a writing utensil

For Classroom Lesson: Workbook optional

For Art Activity: Paper of any size, pens or pencils, colored pencils, markers or crayons, or paint.

Young People's Guide to the Orchestra

This is a list of the timing of when each instrument is seen on the screen.

Beginning – whole orchestra together

:33 - woodwind family
:56 - brass family
1:16 - string family
1:33 - percussion family
1:52 - whole orchestra together

Then individual instruments are explored...first in the woodwind section

2:11 - flute and piccolo
2:44 - oboe
3:38 - clarinet
4:15 - bassoon

Then the string section...

5:05 - violin
5:40 - viola
6:39 - cello
7:42 - double bass
8:47 - harp

Then the brass...

9:33 - French horn
10:21 - Trumpet
10:50 - Trombone (they are not actually shown until 11:00)

Then percussion...

12:08 - Timpani
12:22 - cymbals and bass drum
12:35 - tambourine
12:37 - triangle
12:44 - snare drum
13:07 - castanets

13:20 - Clapper

13:43 - xylophone

At 13:50 until the end of the piece, Britten combines all of the instruments into a big fugue (like the Bach fugue from lesson 1, each instrument comes in with the theme, in layers, overlapping, with other music interweaving in and out)

While listening, use the timings above to point out instrument families and specific instruments. Pause/replay/discuss/brainstorm to prepare for Art Activity.

1. Isolate and do a close-listen of a few specific instruments (the number can vary depending on your time constraints). Ask the students to free associate descriptive words/adjectives that describe the look, sound, character, or timbre of each instrument. For instance, trumpets could be “shiny,” “proud,” “military.” Cellos could be “mellow” “low” “sad.”
2. To keep track, you can write the name of an instrument on the board and list the descriptive words underneath. (Save this list for later.) Guide the students to think about the personality of the instrument and the mood of its music in the Britten like a person...(Shy? Outgoing? Loud? Bossy?) Or like an animal (would the double bass be more like a bear or a mouse?)

Art Activity:

Cartooning (adapted from I Love to Draw Cartoons by Jennifer Lipsey)

Materials needed: Pencil, black pen or marker, eraser, colour (crayons, marker, coloured pencils or paint) Paper

Goal: Draw a cartoon instrument that visually expresses its aural characteristics.

Preparation:

1. Explain that a cartoon is “a simple drawing showing the features of its subjects in a humorously exaggerated way.”
2. Have the students choose an instrument. Use the adjectives from the listening/brainstorming session to help the students create a character for the instrument that they choose.

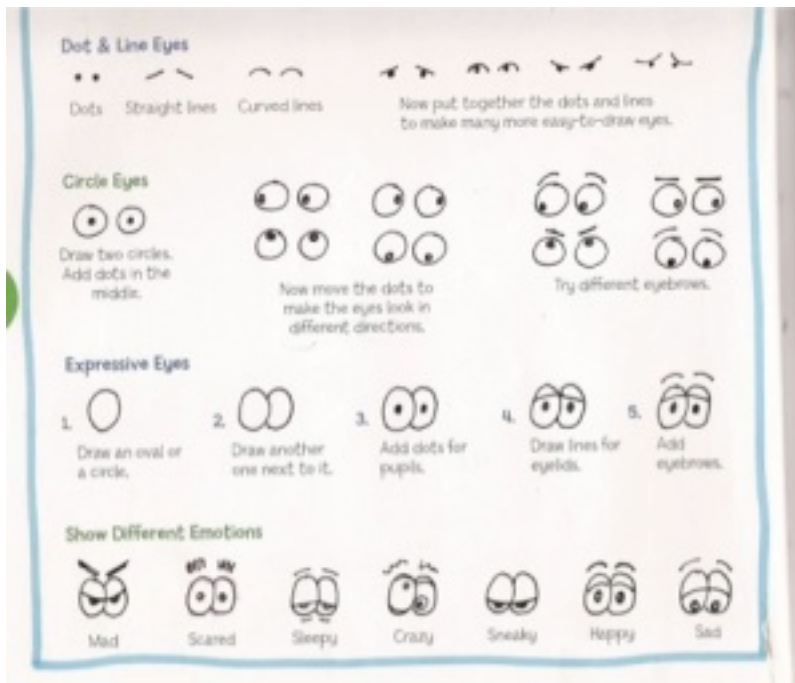
Steps:

1. Draw the basic shape of the chosen instrument in pencil (photos of individual instruments can be googled for reference)
2. Add a face, arms, or legs
3. Add a caption or a funny costume
4. Go over the pencil outline in black pen or thin marker
5. Erase the pencil

6. Colour in!

Things to keep in mind:

Exaggerated facial features can give the character extra life. This is an excerpt (pg. 8) from *I Love Cartoons* by Jennifer Lipsey that shows examples of different emotions with eyes (this is a great book and has lots of other great ideas, highly recommended!).



BONUS (More In Depth!) *Peter and the Wolf*

(This is an extra extension lesson for teachers that have already been through the program or have extra time.)

Peter and the Wolf is a great story and a great piece of music. It is engaging and easy to listen to. I think a first listen should be approached as a storytelling event, in an environment where the students can spread out, have their own space, perhaps even close their eyes, and be allowed to daydream as they listen.

Then teachers can unpack the story for listening comprehension as you would for any story. Start to also tie in musical comprehension as well. For example, you can ask:

1. Which instrument played which character?
2. Why do you think Prokofiev chose the specific instruments for the character? What is it about the flute that fits the bird, for example? What characteristics of the clarinet make it a good cat, etc.."

3. Did any of the instruments actually sound like the animal? (I think Prokofiev makes the oboe quack like a duck for example!)
4. Notice how Prokofiev uses the music to create the mood/show feelings. For example, in the beginning did Peter's theme sound like he was happy or sad? Did the wolves sound scary or friendly? Note the anxiety of the chase scene when the duck gets caught, and the sadness when he is eaten, the drama of when the wolf is captured, the triumph of the processional, etc..
5. Notice how Prokofiev "paints" the story with sound – for example when the cat climbs up the tree, the music goes up and up; when Peter carefully lets the lasso down from the tree, the music winds down from high to low, just like a lasso descending... as the wolf is caught, you can hear the snap of the capture and his jumping to and fro...

Peter and the Wolf Art Activity

Goal: Using the same basic methods as above, have the students create a comic STRIP, telling the story of *Peter and the Wolf*.

Materials needed: Pencil, black pen or marker, eraser, color (crayons, marker, or coloured pencils) Paper

Preparation:

1. Make an outline of the main plot points in *Peter and the Wolf*. The students must summarize the plot in no more than 10 sentences.
2. Create empty comic strip boxes for each sentence. Have the students write each sentence on the top or bottom of each box. Before starting to draw, make sure that the strip tells the whole arc of the story, with all of the key points (the idea is to distil the story to its essence, while still covering the whole arc of the story, beginning, middle and end).
3. Have the students create the picture cartoon within each box that describes the scene using the steps above (from Britten cartoons). The students must somehow incorporate the instruments into the drawings of the animals (e.g. ...A flute with a head and wings becomes the bird; the cat has a clarinet tail, etc...).