



Creating a musically satisfying melody using the pentatonic scale.

In preparation for this topic, the teacher will need to have prepared a suitable 8 bar accompaniment for a melody using notes of the pentatonic scale in any style, using PrintMusic or Finale. Either of these software packages could also be used to create a worksheet suitable for the first teaching activity of the unit, since they both offer the ability to integrate music and text on a single sheet. This unit of work could be used as a stand-alone unit on melody, or integrated into another unit on a specific style or genre. Children who are learning single line acoustic instruments (not guitars) should be encouraged to bring them into school for this topic. This unit of work will take 4-6 lessons.

This task covers the following National Curriculum targets from the Key Stage 3 programme of study:

- 1b) perform with increasing control of instrument specific techniques
- 1c) practise, rehearse and perform with awareness of different parts
- 2a) improvise when performing
- 3a) analyse pieces of music
- 3b) communicate ideas about music using musical vocabulary
- 3c) adapt their own musical ideas and refine and improve their own work
- 5a) integrate performing and composing
- 5b) respond to a musical starting point
- 5c) working on their own and as a class
- 5d) using ICT to manipulate and refine sounds

Teaching Activities:

- Give pupils a printed example of an existing satisfying melody. Pupils learn to play this melody individually using classroom instruments or their own instruments, and perform it in front of the class.
- As a class, look at the score of the melody. Identify the features that make it successful - use of steps and leaps, use of the home note etc.
- Introduce the concept of the pentatonic scale. Pupils learn to play the scale using keyboards (white notes only to fit with the pre-prepared accompaniment) or other classroom instruments, or their own instruments.
- Play pupils the pre-recorded backing on Finale or PrintMusic. Pupils improvise a short pentatonic melody to this backing on the spot, using classroom instruments or their own instruments.
- Review the features of a satisfying melody. Give pupils some time to extend their improvisatory work into a more rounded eight-bar melody using the pentatonic scale. Then, pupils can practise playing their refined melodies in time with the pre-recorded backing track and then record them using Finale or PrintMusic, either using the MIDI keyboard, or using the software's MicNotator to record a single line acoustic instrument.
- Pupils refine the melody further using Finale or PrintMusic's on-screen editing tools until they are happy with the finished result.
- After adding titles, etc. to the score, pupils can print out their finished melody, swap scores with another pupil and try to play the other pupil's melody from the printed music.