

WHOLE CLASS STUDENT RECORDER

TEACHERS' NOTES – LEVEL 1

Holding & Tonguing

The instructions for how to hold a recorder are in the spoken verse - recite it with the backing track. We recommend holding the recorder with the right hand at its base, as this helps younger children to feel a clear difference in the position of their hands, and also stops them accidentally covering up some of the lower notes. It makes no difference whether someone is left or right handed – the right hand should always go at the bottom.

Later on, from Level 3 onwards, as the right hand starts to be used for fingering, the instrument will be held in the proper position, with the right hand in the middle.

Repeat this exercise as often as necessary.

Duration

This exercise introduces the idea that the duration of a musical note can be represented graphically. This is a precursor to proper music notation which will be encountered later in this level.

Play the video, encouraging active listening, and then go through it again using recorders with the back hole covered.

Pitch

Through active listening, this activity develops the aural awareness of pitch. Introduce terms such as high, low and middle if these are not familiar to the class. The children move their hands in the direction of the pitch changes to show their understanding. Follow the prompts in both videos.

First Notes

This exercise is for reviewing the holding position and tonguing, and introduces the first note. Descants start with B, while trebles play E. We recommend starting every lesson with this for the next few weeks.

Lines & Spaces

We believe that students don't find reading music difficult if they are introduced to it from the outset, and that continually writing note names under the music does them no favours in the long run. This exercise is designed to help them learn the difference between lines and spaces on the stave.

The exercise can also be used to reinforce the concept of high and low pitch, by pointing out that higher notes appear at the top of the stave, while lower notes are at the bottom.

Getting Started

This exercise is for introducing semibreves (4 beat notes) and semibreve rests.

When you enlarge the fingering diagram, you will see BSL (British Sign Language) finger spelling for the new note. This can give the teacher a quick and easy means of showing children which note to play, and the children can also use it with each other when they are composing or improvising in pairs.

We find it helpful, but if it doesn't suit your style of teaching, you can simply ignore the BSL symbols. They are only used until the end of Level 3, because when sharps and flats are introduced in Level 4, finger spelling becomes too complicated to be of benefit.

Listen & Copy - Rhythm

This is an exercise in copying a rhythmic phrase. There is no notation because the emphasis here is on listening. The overall aim is for children to develop both aural and music reading skills.

Remind your students to start each note with their tongue.

Round & Round

This exercise is for introducing minims (2 beat notes) and minim rests, plus the time signature of 4/4.

New Notes

Descants will learn A, while trebles learn D. This exercise gives another opportunity for copying rhythms and developing aural awareness.

Samba

This is a 2 note tune with semibreve and minim notes and rests.

Singing – Rhythm

This is an exercise to teach the difference between beat and rhythm, and the way in which a rhythm can be laid on top of a beat or pulse. Half the class tap the beat on their thighs, while the other half clap the rhythm of the vocal phrases. Then swap ...

Feeling Good

This is a 2 note tune with crotchet notes and rests. Sometimes a 2 beat rest is shown by 2 crotchet rests, and sometimes by a minim rest – these are interchangeable in this context.

There is only one tutti version of the tune, with the descants playing B and A, while the trebles just play D.

Music Elements – Tempo, Structure & Pitch

This exercise begins with a revision of the concept of tempo and then helps students to understand the way in which music is divided into bars. Finally, it leads into an opportunity for very basic rhythmic improvisation, whilst also reinforcing the earlier lesson on the difference between high and low pitch. Follow the prompts in the video.

Performing – Saddle Up

This piece includes dotted minims for the first time, as well as a time signature. There is an entire exercise devoted to time signatures in Level 2.

For this tune, the introduction is written into the notation.