

# Discover the sounds of your school

Primary: (ages 7 – 11)

Music

Students are asked to create a composition with sounds that they find and record around their school. Students develop sensitivity to and understanding of music through observation, composition, and performance. They pay careful attention to various organic sound resources and use music to represent the character of particular spaces. Students practice using their perception, find the relevance to musicality of what they discover in their environment, and apply this to their creation. Students also explore and reflect on their composition in multiple ways to create and develop musical ideas.

*Note: There is also an extended version of this activity available for use in secondary contexts*

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**Time allocation**      About 3 lesson periods

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**Subject content**      Observe environment and use and/or reproduce found sounds for composition  
Expand range of musicality  
Analyse composition and musical factors

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**Creativity and critical thinking**      This unit has a **creativity** focus:

- Make connections between environment and musical concepts
- Play with unusual ideas and sounds in composing musical pieces
- Compose, perform, and reflect on music with expressive qualities

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**Other skills**      Collaboration, Communication

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**Key words**      Sound from found objects; rhythm; tempo; composition; music performance

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**Products and processes to assess**

Students observe their sound environment and compose, perform, and appraise musical pieces evoking and reflecting the sounds they hear and the impressions they have in one part of this environment. At the highest level of achievement, their output is imaginative, original, and has a meaningful relation to the area it represents. Their work process demonstrates a willingness to explore and play with a variety of ideas for their composition, and see connections between their environment, the sounds they hear, and music. They are able to reflect on the process, show good awareness of why they have made their final choices, and perform with musicality.

## Teaching and Learning plan

This plan suggests potential steps for implementing the activity. Teachers can introduce as many modifications as they see fit to adapt the activity to their teaching context.

Step	Duration	Teacher and student roles	Subject content	Creativity and critical thinking
1	Lesson period 1	<p>Teacher gives students a mission to choose an area of the school, and find its sounds and use those sounds to compose music that represents that area of the school</p> <p>Teachers guide students to parts of the school they can explore. Teachers give students examples of sounds students can possibly hear in the school (e.g. birds; students' laughing; water; photocopy machine; phones; etc.).</p> <p>Students move around the school, choose a location and observe its music and noises. Students might record sounds with a sound or video recorder if possible.</p> <p>Teachers can ask students to write down their observations and discoveries in their own words or in drawings. Teacher circulates among groups asking them about what sort of sounds and music they associate with that area of the school and why</p>	<p>Listening carefully and identifying the sounds of the school environment and their characteristics</p>	<p>Observing and making connections between their environment, the sounds they hear, and music</p>
2	Lesson period 2	<p>Teacher introduces some instruments and objects that students can use for composition and uses them to demonstrates variations of rhythms. Teacher provides some time for students to practice creating different rhythms with instruments and objects.</p> <p>Students start to plan and compose a three-minute piece in groups of four using various sound resources: bodies, voices, instruments and objects. The piece should reflect the area of the school.</p> <p>Teacher circulates asking students about the reasoning behind their choices, prompting students to reflect on and improve their compositions and giving feedback</p>	<p>Using various sound resources to build a music structure</p> <p>Combining sounds and patterns into the piece</p>	<p>Envisioning the expressive qualities of sounds in their school environment, and composing a meaningful and imaginative piece</p>
3	Lesson period 3	<p>Each group performs for the whole class and records their performance. The class guesses what the location is.</p> <p>Teachers can remind the class of appropriate audience and listening behaviour as necessary.</p>	<p>Performing original music and developing awareness of his/her personal contribution to the ensemble</p>	<p>Building expressive qualities into performance</p>
4		<p>Each group appraises another group's work in terms of how well the location was</p>		<p>Making connections between their</p>

captured and the quality of composition and musical elements.

Teacher leads a discussion asking students to reflect on strengths and weaknesses, why they think the group made those particular choices, and what alternatives might have been.

own work and the work of others

Reviewing the opinion of others and finding and/or comparing perspectives on expressive qualities

Appraising and justifying opinion logically and reasonably

## Resources and examples for inspiration

### Web and print

- If desired, teacher could show students videos of pieces composed from found sound for inspiration or comparison. E.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPU3NefyktQ>

### Other

- Audio/video: students listen to music to compare with music pieces (to be chosen by teacher as appropriate)
- Sound recorder: record any sounds when students go around the school
- Video recorder: record students' performance
- Any instruments necessary for students to compose

### Opportunities to adapt, extend, and enrich

- Could be compressed to a 1-2 lesson warm up activity to a project related to imitative music patterns
- Could be developed into a bigger project, for example, by asking students to make a film to go with their composition or to create the music for a film prospectus for the school
- Students could be asked to notate their piece (as appropriate to level)
- Students could be asked to compare the process and outcomes of creating pieces completely composed of sounds from found objects and creating pieces in which instruments are also used

**Creativity and critical thinking rubric for music**

• Mapping of the different steps of the lesson plan against the OECD rubric to identify the creative and/or critical thinking skills the different parts of the lesson aim to develop

	<b>CREATIVITY</b> Coming up with new ideas and solutions	<b>Steps</b>	<b>CRITICAL THINKING</b> Questioning and evaluating ideas and solutions	<b>Steps</b>
<b>INQUIRING</b>	Make connections to other musical styles concepts or conceptual ideas in other disciplines	1,4	Identify and question assumptions and conventional rules in a musical performance, composition or analysis	
<b>IMAGINING</b>	Play with unusual and radical ideas when preparing to perform, compose, orchestrate, or analyse a music piece	2-6	Consider several perspectives on a musical performance, composition, interpretation or analysis	
<b>DOING</b>	Perform, compose, or analyse music with expressive qualities or relating to personally meaningful subject matter	2,3,5	Explain both strengths and limitations of a performance, a composition or an analysis of a music piece	
<b>REFLECTING</b>	Reflect on steps taken to create performances, compositions or analyses of a music piece	4,6	Reflect on the chosen way of performing, composing or analysing a music piece relative to possible alternatives	4,6