

CRACKING THE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

Grade Level: Music (Kindergarten)

Presented by: Marian Byers and Dana Cox, William Jefferson Clinton Primary, Hope, AR
and Darcel Zemke, Pea Ridge Elementary School, Pea Ridge, Arkansas

Length of Unit: 5 lessons

I. ABSTRACT

Students will love the story of the Nutcracker and enjoy the delightful melodies and variety of rhythms in this five lessons music unit. Designed for Kindergarten teachers with no musical background or for music teachers, the unit introduces the elements of music and teaches students to distinguish rhythm, melody, harmony, form and timbre. Kindergartners will gain an appreciation for the way musical elements paint a picture, evoke feeling, and set a mood. This unit is also conducive to use in Literacy Centers.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objectives

1. Develop an awareness of the elements of music.
2. Develop an appreciation of music.
3. Develop an awareness of elements of line in art.

B. Content

1. Through participation, become familiar with some basic elements of music: rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and timbre.

C. Skill Objectives

1. The student will respond to music through movement. Arkansas State Standards; Music: (1.1.2), (1.1.3), (3.1.5), Art: (1.2.2) (1.2.3) (2.1.2) (4.1.1), Language: LSV (1.3), (1.7), (1.10),
2. The student will recognize a steady beat. Arkansas State Standards; Music: (1.1.2), (3.1.3), (3.1.5), Language: LSV (1.3), (1.7), (1.10).
3. The student will compare loud and soft. Arkansas State Standards; Music: (2.1.1), (2.1.3), (3.1.5), (4.1.1), Language: LSV (1.3), (1.12), Language Arts: R (1.16).
4. The student will contrast fast and slow. Arkansas State Standards; Music: (1.1.2), (2.1.3), (4.1.2), (4.2.1), Language: LSV (1.3).
5. The student will discriminate between obvious differences in pitch: high and low. Arkansas State Standards; Music: (1.1.2), (2.1.3), (4.1.2), Language: LSV: (1.3), Science: ES (3.1).
6. The students participate in listening skills. Arkansas Early Literacy Program, Kindergarten Literacy Checklist: Listening, Speaking, Viewing Competencies.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE.

A. For Teachers

1. Copland, Aaron. *What to Listen for in Music*.
2. Gaden, Francis and Maillard, Robert. *Dictionary of Modern Ballet*.
3. Tchaikovsky, Petr Illich. *Nutcracker* (CD)

- B. For Students
 1. The students will have a basic understanding of line as taught in *What Every Kindergarten Needs to Know*, page 160.

IV. RESOURCES

- A. Copland, Aaron. *What to Listen for in Music*.
- B. Gaden, Francis and Maillard, Robert. *Dictionary of Modern Ballet*.
- C. Tchaikovsky, Petr Illich. *Nutcracker* (CD).

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: MOVE THOSE LINES!

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Develop an awareness of the elements of music
 - b. Develop an appreciation of music
 - c. Develop an awareness of elements of line in art
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Rhythm
 - b. Melody
 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. The student will listen to the four (4) short selections from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet and respond with whole body movements.
 - b. The student will compare the four (4) selections of music by listening to the music and using the four (4) types of lines to express the movement in music.
 - c. Students will understand definitions of rhythm and melody.
- B. *Materials*
 1. Recording of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet
 2. Art paper
 3. Student crayons or colored pencils
 4. Tape player, CD player or record player
 5. Story of the Nutcracker (See Appendix A)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 1. Melody - The organized succession of musical tones of given pitches and duration
 2. Rhythm- Form repeated
 3. Line- a horizontal row of written or printed characters
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
 1. Teacher will summarize the story of the *Nutcracker* ballet.
 2. Students will listen to the selections of music: Act I, "March"; Act II, "Tea Dance" or "Chinese Dance", "Trepak"(Russian Dance), and "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy".
 3. The teacher will play one selection of music and discuss with students the melody, rhythm, mood and movement of the music.
 4. The teacher will again play the selection of music and students will respond with whole body movement to the melody and rhythm of the music.

5. The teacher will continue with selections from Act II in the same manner.
- E. *Evaluation/Assessment*
1. The student will listen to the four selections of music. Using crayons and art paper students will illustrate the rhythm and movement of the music through the use of one type of line per selection. (See Appendix B)

Lesson Two: CRACKING THE BEAT!

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Develop an awareness of the elements of music.
 - b. Develop an appreciation of music.
 2. Lesson Content
Through participation, become familiar with some basic elements of music: rhythm, melody, harmony and form.
 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. The student will recognize a steady beat; begin to play a steady beat.
 - b. The student will identify the beat in the four (4) selections of music.
 - c. The students will compare the beat in the four (4) selections of music.
 - d. Students will recognize form and harmony in music.
- B. *Materials*
1. Recording of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet
 2. Tape recorder, CD player or record player
 3. Rhythm sticks
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Beat- A metrical or rhythmic stress in poetry or music
 2. Form- The way music is played; the beat
 3. Harmony- A group of sounds that go together evenly
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. The teacher will explain the definitions for harmony, form and beat.
 2. The teacher will demonstrate a steady beat and have children join in.
 3. Continue demonstrating a steady beat. Have students demonstrate their own steady beat.
 4. Using rhythm sticks students will play a previously demonstrated steady beat.
 5. Students will listen to the four (4) selections of music and using the rhythm sticks tap out the steady beat.
 6. Using the rhythm sticks student will compare the beat in the four (4) selections of music.
- E. *Evaluation/Assessment*
1. The teacher will observe students in groups of four or five, responding to the beat of the four (4) selections of music.

Lesson Three: CAN YOU HEAR IT?

- A. *Daily Objective*
1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Develop an awareness of the elements of music.

- b. Develop an appreciation of music.
 - 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Through participation, become familiar with some basic elements of music: rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and timbre .
 - 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will listen to the four (4) selections of music and discriminate between loud and soft.
 - b. Students will categorize pictures representing loud or soft sounds.
 - c. Students will recognize timbre.
- B. *Materials*
 - 1. Recordings of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet.
 - 2. Tape player, CD player or record player.
 - 3. Chart paper.
 - 4. Scissors.
 - 5. Glue
 - 6. Pictures (See Appendix B)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 - 1. Loud: Applied to volume above normal.
 - 2. Soft: Quiet in pitch or volume.
 - 3. Timbre: The sounds of the notes; high, low, loud and soft.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
 - 1. Discuss everyday sounds with students that are loud and soft.
 - 2. Teacher will define timbre as related to loud and soft sounds.
 - 3. Students will listen to the four selections of music and identify the loud and soft sections by raising their hand for loud and soft sounds.
- E. *Evaluation/Assessment*
 - 1. Students will construct a chart categorizing pictures representing loud or soft sounds. (See Appendix C)

Lesson Four: ARE YOU A TURTLE OR A RABBIT?

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 - 1. Concept Objectives(s)
 - a. Develop an awareness of the elements of music.
 - b. Develop an appreciation of music.
 - 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Through participation, become familiar with some basic elements of music: rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and timbre.
 - 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Discriminate between fast and slow sounds.
 - b. Students will recognize that form refers to fast and slow in reference to music.
- B. *Materials*
 - 1. Recording of Tchikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet.
 - 2. Tape player, CD player or record player
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 - 1. Fast: In quick succession.

2. Slow: Flowing; without speed.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Brainstorm animals that move slowly, such as; turtles and cows, and animals that move fast, such as; a rabbit and a mouse.
 2. Teacher will tell students that form is not only the beat of music but also how fast or slow music is.
 3. Listen to the four (4) selections of music and have the students discriminate between fast and slow by tapping their feet.
- E. *Evaluation/Assessment*
1. Using the four (4) music selections the students will play musical chairs with the understanding of moving fast and slow depending on the form of the music.

Lesson Five: HOW DOES IT GO.... WAY UP HIGH OR WAY DOWN LOW?

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Develop an awareness of the elements of music.
 - b. Develop an appreciation of music.
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Through participation, become familiar with some basic elements Of music: rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and timbre.
 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Discriminate between differences in pitch: high and low.
 - b. Children will recognize that timbre also refers to high and low sounds of musical notes.
- B. *Materials*
1. Xylophone with sticks
 2. Recording of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet
 3. Tape player, CD player or record player
- C. *Vocabulary*
1. Xylophone: An instrument consisting of bars graduated in length to produce the musical scale
 2. High: Elevated in pitch
 3. Low: Toward the bottom of the range of pitch attainable
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Begin by allowing students to experience tapping out sounds on the xylophone.
 2. The teacher will differentiate between high and low sounds by explaining that birds have a high sound: "tweet, tweet", and frogs have a low sound: "croak, croak".
 3. The teacher will tell students that timbre is high and low sounds of the musical notes.
 4. The teacher will demonstrate the high sounds by tapping out the shortest bar on the xylophone and pointing out that this is a high sound like the bird's "tweet, tweet".
 5. The teacher will demonstrate the low sound by tapping out the longest bar on the xylophone and pointing out that is like the frog's "croak, croak".
 6. Students will then use the xylophone to tap out sounds identifying the high

and low sounds.

E. *Evaluation/Assessment*

1. Using varying amounts of water in different glasses, demonstrate high and low sounds by tapping on the different glasses and identifying high and low sounds.

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY (Optional)

- A. As a culminating activity the students will perform/act out, one of the four (4) selections of music. Students will select one of four pictures that represent their favorite selection of music. These pictures are then placed on a picture graph indicating their favorite. Student may construct props and scenery to “stage” their production of the class favorite. This can be performed for other classes, parents, or the community. (See Appendix C)

VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

Appendix A: Story of the *Nutcracker*.

Appendix B: Lines

Appendix C: Loud and Soft (2 pages)

Appendix D: Pictures for voting

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A. Balanchine, George and Mason, Francis. *Complete Stories of the Great Ballets*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1978, ISBN
- B. Barbour, Harriot Buxton and Freeman, Warren S. *How To Teach Children To Know Music*. New York, American Book, Stratford Press, Inc., 1942. ISBN pre-dated.
- C. Brason, Judy and Law, Felicia. *The Ballet Class*. London, Octopus Books Limited, 1980. ISBN 0706413628
- D. Chappell, Waren. *The Nutcracker* (Based on the Alexander Dumas, pre, version). New York, Alfred Knoph, 1958. ISBN pre-dated.
- E. Copland, Aaron. *What to Listen for in Music*. New York, Whittlesey House/McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1939. ISBN pre-dated
- F. Gaden, Francis and Maillard, Robert. *Dictionary of Modern Ballet*. New York, Tudor Publishing Company, 1959, pages 81-83. ISBN pre-date
- G. Igus, Toyomi. *I See the Rhythm*. San Francisco, CA., Children’s Book Press, 1988. ISBN 0892391510
- H. Switzer, Ellen. *Nutcracker*. New York, Atheneum, 1985. ISBN 0-689-31061-7
- I. Tchaikovsky, Petr Illich. *Nutcracker_(CD)*. Munich, Germany, MVD Music and Video Distribution, 1987, 1995.

Appendix A-Cracking the Elements of Music

The Nutcracker Synopsis

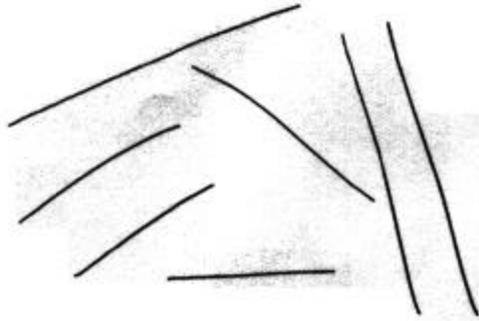
Once there was a little girl named Marie who had a Christmas Eve party. Her Christmas tree was grand, with shining lights and tiny silver toy flutes. Under her tree she had many presents, many of which were dolls. One was a peasant boy doll from her own country of Russia. He was dressed in bright pantaloons and shiny black knee boots. There was also a doll dressed in light Arabian garb who wore bangles and gold loops in her ears, and a pig-tailed Chinese doll with long braids who wore a satin jacket, bright trousers and a tiny skull cap. At the top of the tree was a fairy made of spun sugar and plums. Marie loved none of these dolls as she loved her beloved Nutcracker doll who was ugly, with a hooked nose, curved jaw, and a suit with a pointed cap made of red velvet and gold braid.

The children had a wonderful time at the party playing and romping. As time wore on the children became rowdy. Marie's friends began to swing the Nutcracker around and around by his arm and soon the old Nutcracker was broken apart. His arm hung pitifully askew and his leg was broken completely off. His lovely little cap was torn from his head. Now Marie could no longer enjoy her party---not even when it was time to eat all the lovely pastries, nuts, and candies laid upon the table. She could not forget her broken Nutcracker.

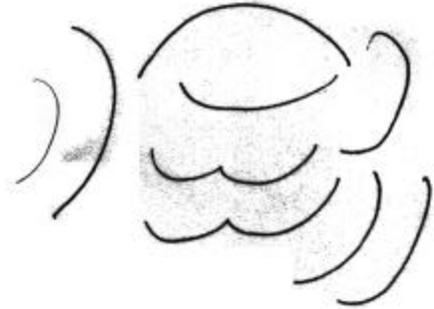
When her guests had gone home and Marie was in bed for the night, she could not sleep. She tossed and turned while thoughts of her Nutcracker and the party chased around in her head. She must go to the broken little toy lying in the dark. As she walked along the cold dark hall where the Christmas tree stood, the clock struck midnight. All at once the tree glowed—the toys came to life and marched around the tree—all but the Nutcracker. Marie spied the broken toy in the corner just as the other toys rushed him and began tearing him apart. Marie rushed to her poor Nutcracker and drove all the other toys away. Suddenly the Nutcracker turned into a lovely fairy prince. He took Marie by the hand to the land of the Sugar Plum Fairy. Marie was starry eyed as all the dolls danced the dances of their countries. The Sugar Plum Fairy danced a beautiful dance for Marie. At the end the Nutcracker whisked Marie off to the grand ball in the land of the Sugar Plum Fairy. Marie was excited, for she had never seen anything quite so lovely in all her life. As she wandered around, the Nutcracker began to dance a lively number with the silver flutes from Marie's Christmas tree. Marie watched in wonder. Her eyes opening wider and wider as she found herself back in the hall with the dark Christmas tree and her beloved old Nutcracker. Her adventure into the land of the Sugar Plum Fairy was all a dream.

APPENDIX B

Lines come in all kinds: straight, curved, zig



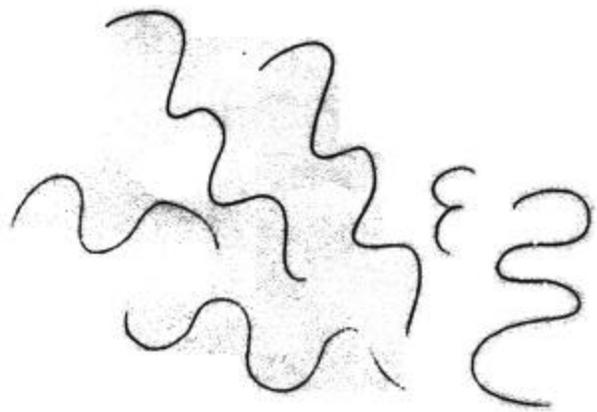
straight



curved



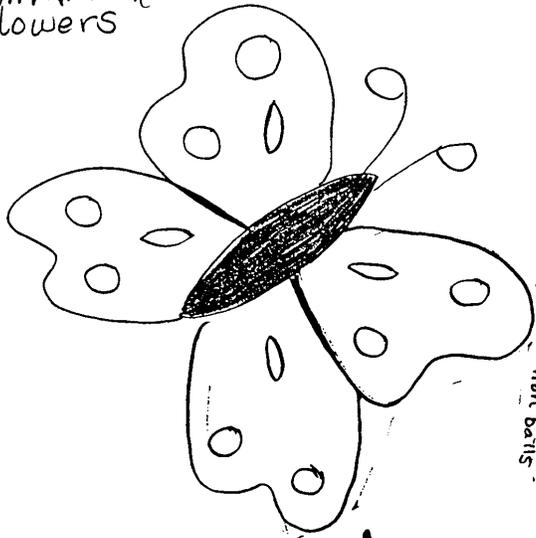
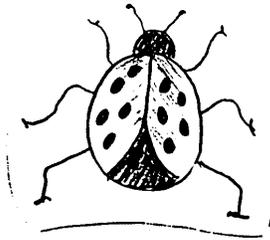
zigzag



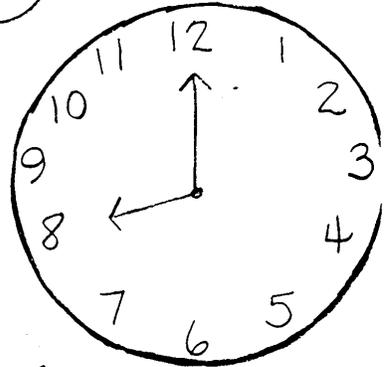
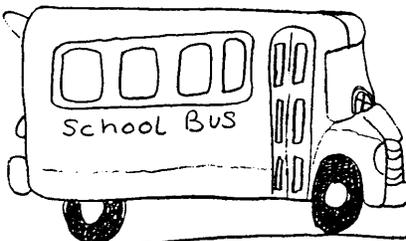
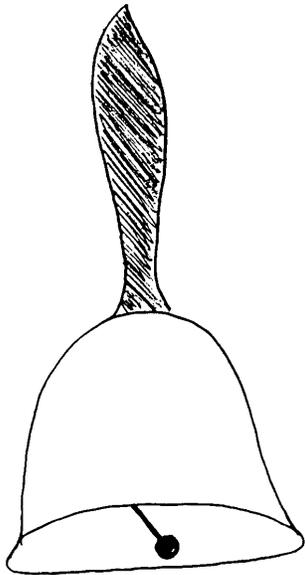
wavy

APPENDIX C

Soft:



Loud:



Appendix C-2

Loud	Soft

Appendix D

