

Songs as starting points

Presented by **Sue Nicholls**

KS1: HELLO TO YOU A warm-up rap where every line echoes

The underlined syllables indicate the pulse or strong beat

Hello to <u>you</u> !	<i>[arms at full stretch; point to pupils around the circle]</i>
Move your <u>sh</u> oulders: one, <u>two</u> !	<i>[shrug shoulders twice]</i>
Now <u>stamp</u> your <u>feet</u> !	<i>[stamp feet twice]</i>
And <u>clap</u> on the <u>beat</u> !	<i>[clap twice –to side and then the other]</i>
Hands <u>stretch</u> up <u>high</u> !	<i>[raise one arm above your head followed by the other]</i>
Wiggle <u>fingers</u> near the <u>sky</u> !	<i>[wiggle fingers on upraised arms]</i>
Give a <u>smile</u> , give a <u>grin</u> !	<i>[do the actions as you say the word]</i>
Turn <u>around</u> and <u>spin</u> !	<i>[four little steps to turn yourself round in a small circle]</i>
Well <u>done</u> , everyone!	<i>[thumbs up]</i>
Our <u>music</u> 's begun!	<i>[tap watch]</i>

Take every opportunity to make the arm actions cross the 'mid' line, which supports 'Brain Gym' and 'Activate' principles, making neural connections between the two hemispheres of the brain!

Create a shared cross-phase activity by encouraging pupils in KS2 to write their own performance echo raps using similar syllable patterns for KS1 children to perform. Here are some pairs of rhymes that could be used to support this activity:

sure/floor, hand/band, click/ flick, groove/ move, bend/end, slide/glide, put/foot, wave/rave, trip/flip, sky/fly, twiddle/middle...

OR use names & action rhymes:

head/Fred, bike/Mike, knee/ Dee, keep on/John, still/Phil, fuss/Gus, again/Wayne, dive/Clive, do/Sue, crawl/Paul, etc. whiz/Liz, kick/Nick, back/Jack, awake/Jake,

KS1: HATS GALORE! based on 'My hat' from 'Bingo Lingo' published by A & C Black
**My hat it is too FLOPPY,
Too FLOPPY is my hat!
Because it is too floppy,
I will not wear my hat!**

I used one of Helen MacGregor's brilliant songs linking singing and Literacy as the starting point. Use real hats wherever possible, particularly if working within a historical topic, for example: Victorians: *mobcaps, top hats, cloth caps, veils...* but anything goes! AST delegates wore policemen's caps, witches' hats, crowns...and there was nearly a fight for possession of the tiaras!!

I adapted the descriptive language focus in Helen's song, so that children could explore words for *timbre*.

Each child selects an untuned instrument and finds the best word to describe its sound. For example:

Guiro:
**My sound is very SCRATCHY,
I chose this sound today.
Because my sound is SCRATCHY,
I like to hear it play.**

Woodblock:
**My sound is very HOLLOW,
I chose this sound today.
Because my sound is HOLLOW,
I like to hear it play.**

After singing each new 'verse', use the '**magic clock**' to conduct a solo performance.

This is a simple device to give children a visible time-frame in which to play their improvisation. The conductor – the leader or adult – stands with hands straight up above his/her head like a clock's hands set to midnight. The music can be played when one arm is moved round in a circle, like the minute hand, and ends when the 'midnight' position is reached again. The circular sweep is very easy for young children to understand and gives a very clear indication of the length of their performance piece.

Having enjoyed a solo improvisation on a 'scratchy' guiro, why not ask any other players if they can produce a scratchy sound on their chosen instrument? Repeat the 'magic clock' for a group performance.

Here is a very simple score format on which to record their work on timbre:

My name _____

My instrument's name _____

This is a picture of my instrument

My sound is very _____

I chose this sound today!

Because my sound is _____

I like to hear it play!

KS1: Sounds Together soon to be published in **'The Song Stack'** by **Music Education Sales**

Learn this very simple song by sharing: the leader sings the song lines while the children take responsibility for the actions and sounds

The pattern changes for each successive verse making strong links with predicting sequences as in KS1 Numeracy:

Verse 1: clap, clap, clap, clap!

Verse 2: clap, clap, clap, **stamp!**

Verse 3: clap, clap, **stamp, click!**

Verse 4: clap, **stamp, click, Wheee!**

This pattern can form the basis for composition using instrumental sounds.

Begins with **tap, tap, tap, tap** on claves then select three other sound sources to complete the pattern

tap	tap	tap	tap
tap	tap	tap	scrape
tap	tap	scrape	ring
tap	scrape	ring	shake

You could substitute actions: **jump, hop, skip, twist** etc. or change the sounds/actions for colours:

'Paint it red, red, red, red- keep it nice and even...


KS2: Doo-bi doo! A sung 'call and response' rap that changes pitch, from **'The Song Stack'**.


Doo bi doo!


Nicholls

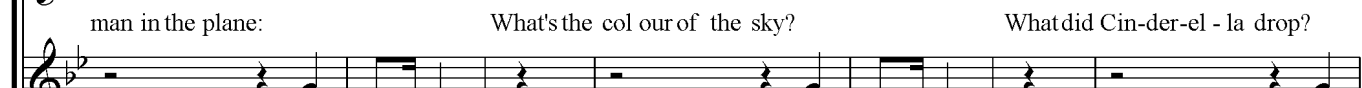
Call 
Doo-bi- doo! Doo-bi- doo! Who's lead-ing this rap? Do we


Response 
Doo-bi- doo! Doo-bi- doo Its you, its_ you!



keep the beat? What's in that pot? Here's a plate of chips: And the



We do, we do! It's stew, Its_ stew! Let's chew, let's chew,

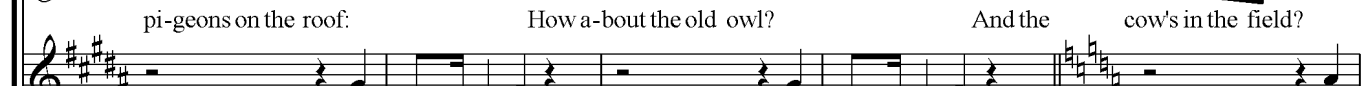

man in the plane: What's the col our of the sky? What did Cin-der-el - la drop?


He flew, he_ flew, It's blue, it's_ blue, Her


And Jack's ma-gic beans? Who stole the trea- sure? The


shoe, her_ shoe, They grew, they grew! The crew, the_ crew!


pi-geons on the roof: How a- bout the old owl? And the cow's in the field?


They coo, they coo! Twittwoo twit twoo. They


Here's the Tar - dis man_ Aren't we just the best?


moo, they moo, Doc - tor Who, Doc - tor Who, It's


Doo - bi - doo, Doo - bi- doo! Doo - bi - doo!


true, it's_ true! Doo - bi - doo, Doo - bi- doo! Doo - bi - doo!

The pitch of the starting note is raised by a semi-tone on starred lines to give more variety and keep your singers on their toes!

Doo-bi-doo! Doo-bi-doo!	<i>Doo-bi- doo! Doo-bi-doo!</i>
Who's leading this rap?	<i>It's you, it's you!</i>
Do we keep the beat?	<i>We do, we do!</i>
What's in that pot?	<i>It's stew, it's stew!</i>
*Here's a plate of chips:	<i>Let's chew, let's chew,</i>
And the man in the plane:	<i>He flew, he flew,</i>
What's the colour of the sky?	<i>It's blue, it's blue,</i>
What did Cinderella drop?	<i>Her shoe, her shoe,</i>
*And Jack's magic beans?	<i>They grew, they grew!</i>
Who stole the treasure?	<i>The crew, the crew,</i>
The pigeons on the roof:	<i>They coo, they coo,</i>
How about the old owl?	<i>Twit twoo twit twoo</i>
*And the cows in the field?	<i>They moo, they moo,</i>
Here's the Tardis man?	<i>Dr. Who, Dr. Who,</i>
Aren't we just the best?	<i>It's true, it's true!</i>
Doo-bi- doo! Doo-bi- doo!	<i>Doo-bi- doo! Doo-bi- doo! Doo- bi-doo!</i>

Sung raps are a very useful way of encouraging reluctant singers to vocalise by using simple, repetitive sung phrases that don't really seem like singing...a sort of half-way house between spoken/chanted raps and fully melodic songs!

Initially, have the responses on an overhead projector, IWB or printed on cards, but, because the responses reflect the questions so closely, you will find that the children quickly abandon written cues and remember their 'lines' simply by association.

Invite your Y5 & 6 pupils to write their own versions, modelled on this outline, but using a different rhyme pattern:

Tweedle Dee, Tweedle Dee
Who makes the honey?

Tweedle Dee, Tweedle Dee
The bumble bee

KS2: CLOUDS a pentatonic song

This gentle, slow one-verse song is ideal for encouraging improvisation using a pentatonic scale

Clouds - A Pentatonic Song

Nicholls

Slowly, Gently

Voice

When the sky is full of clouds, hea-vy, dark and grey. You know rain it's sure to fall, here to - day.

Learn the song, line by line, using hand pitching to help with intervals

Remove B and F notes from tuned instruments and ask children to improvise accompaniments with two players to a xylophone. Have the children sitting in a circle with the instruments placed in an inner circle so that the children move around the xylophones, metallophones etc. providing everyone with frequent opportunities to play:

- use the pulse rhythm to play slow, improvised two-note chords while other sing
- invite variations in the rhythm pattern within their improvised accompaniment so that more able players can be adventurous
- add untuned percussion
- invite some children to play the melody
- sing and play the song as a canon

Divide the children into 4s with one tuned instrument per group. They can then work on a performance, creating interludes between verses/canons and deciding how their piece will start and end

Compose a new melody/accompaniment to these words, using the same pentatonic scale

*Soon the sun will show its face
Brightening the sky
Clouds will vanish: then we'll see
Bluebirds fly.*

Upper KS2:

Four white horses from Banana Splits published by A & C Black: a song from the Virgin Islands

This lively Caribbean song doesn't need to be taught, it will be 'absorbed' while the children perform the clapping pattern as the leader sings

Work in pairs- stand opposite each other and learn the first clapping pattern:

Clap right, clap own, clap left, clap own [4-beat pattern]

Learn the second more complex pattern:

clap right, clap own, clap left, clap own, clap both partner's hands, clap own [six-beat pattern] and feel the tension of an accompaniment that doesn't match the sung 4-beat phrases.

Work with two sets of partners, each person stands opposite their partner in a small circle of 4: one pair becomes the 'high' couple, the other pair - the 'low' couple. The two couples follow the **first four clapped patterns** above/below the other pair, but after that, instead of clapping both your partner's hands, the four players clap 'sideways'.

Groups of 4 can then compose alternative clapping sequences to accompany the song, using factors of 48 [the number of beats in the whole song]: e.g. 2, 3, 6, 8, 12...

Report by Sue Nicholls, former Music AST, who from September 2007 will work as a free-lance music consultant

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