



### LESSON SUMMARY

Through guided exploration and the incorporation of musical form, students will create their own soundscape and graphic score based on a poem entitled "Tree". The objective of this activity is for students to be able to connect with the world around them to express themselves musically, as well broaden their personal definition of what music encompasses.

## Activity Information

<b>Grade Level:</b>	Primary
<b>Estimated Duration:</b>	One 40 minute class periods
<b>Materials:</b>	Chart paper, markers, chalk, two claves per student, shakers, 'found' materials around the classroom and a camera
<b>Setting:</b>	Indoors
<b>Key Vocabulary:</b>	Soundscape, Timbre, Graphic Score

## Teacher Background

Before beginning this activity, the teacher must have already have discussed the basics of timbre and sound quality such as low, high, soft, loud, fast and slow. Students will be required to improvise, so the teacher will have to model various techniques on found materials around the classroom to enable students to feel free in their personal exploration.

## Teacher Preparation

Before this activity begins, the teacher must have a copy of the poem “Tree” by Harry Behn readily available. It is recommended that a slideshow presentation is created to enhance the students’ creativity, providing them with images with which to base their compositions around.

In order for students to be able to successfully create a graphic score, the teacher must display through listening and written examples the broad scope of graphics that can be incorporated, encouraging students to create their composition’s score as a graphic representation of the sounds that they create (e.g. x’s for hard strokes, high and low for pitches, wavy lines for shaking). The graphic score should convey the desired timbres in their compositions.

## Curriculum Connections:

### Grade 3 Music

#### Specific Expectations

- **C1.2**

- *apply the elements of music when singing, playing an instrument, and moving (e.g., timbre: sort sound sources by the way their sound is produced and make choices about which instruments will play in specific sections; form: change direction in a circle to show A and B sections of a song in ABA form; duration: sing a song first very quickly then very slowly, and explain how the different tempi change their experience of the music)*

- **C1.3**

- *create compositions for a specific purpose and a familiar audience (e.g., create musical accompaniments for poems)*

- **C1.5**

- *demonstrate an understanding of standard and non-traditional musical notation (e.g., design melody maps based on the direction of the melody; demonstrate various ways of representing sounds using devised symbols; perform melodic patterns based on the notes “do”, “re”, “mi”, “so”, and “la” by using solfège hand signs; create soundscapes illustrating dynamics and timbre)*

**Overall Expectations****• Creating and Performing: C1**

- *apply the creative process to create and perform music for a variety of purposes, using the elements and techniques of music*

**• Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing: C2**

- *apply the critical analysis process to communicate their feelings, ideas, and understandings in response to a variety of music and musical experiences*

**• C1.5**

- *demonstrate an understanding of standard and non-traditional musical notation (e.g., design melody maps based on the direction of the melody; demonstrate various ways of representing sounds using devised symbols; perform melodic patterns based on the notes "do", "re", "mi", "so", and "la" by using solfège hand signs; create soundscapes illustrating dynamics and timbre)*

**Activity****STEP ONE**

- The teacher will facilitate a discussion on the importance of wood in creating musical instruments. Have students brainstorm the instruments they have heard of or may have already been exposed to and list the materials with which they are made.
  - How often does wood come up?
  - Probes for strings, woodwinds and percussion may be necessary. Encourage the use of these distinguishing musical groups.

**STEP TWO**

- As a "Minds On" activity, the teacher will distribute two "sticks" (claves) to every student.
- The teacher will involve the students in a game of musical dominoes. For the initial rounds of this game, the teacher provides the model, yet after a few rounds, student volunteers are encouraged.
  - The class will find a comfortable beat (when first starting off it is recommended that the tempo is no faster than 80 beats per minute).
  - The class should be standing in a circle for the game. The teacher will start by passing a quarter note in a clockwise direction, listening in to see if students are maintaining a relatively steady beat. When the class proves to be comfortable with this, the teacher will pass two eighth notes around the circle.

- The teacher may choose to incorporate various dynamic levels at this point, enabling a discussion on the tone quality of wood.
- To increase the complexity of this activity, the teacher will start by passing around either a quarter note or two eighth notes in one direction, while, after waiting for a few students to pass this rhythm around, an additional rhythm will be passed around the circle simultaneously.
  - Depending on the level of comfort within the classroom, the teacher may choose to alternate between clockwise and counter clockwise with the integration of multiple rhythms around the circle.
  - If the students are comfortable with passing around two rhythms in opposing directions and continue to have a steady beat, a third rhythm can be introduced.
    - It is not always necessary for the claves to be used for the rhythms, stomping and clapping may also be incorporated to add complexity to coordination. Rhythms can be altered depending on the skill level of the class.

### **STEP THREE**

- Students will be introduced to the concept of a soundscape – a piece of music or combination of sounds which reflect the surrounding environment.
- Have students brainstorm places they can think of (subway station, elevator, motor boat etc.). Have students brainstorm about the sounds that they hear in the forest, taking note of them on chart paper.
- Using another sheet of chart paper, have students brainstorm characteristics of musical timbre – high, low, soft, loud, fast, slow.
  - Have the students create a soundscape using materials in the area around them – shakers from the classroom, crumpled paper, claves, stomping of their feet, drumming of their body.

**STEP FOUR**

- Task: Students will create a soundscape based around the reading of the poem “Tree” by Harry Behn.

Trees are the kindest things I know,  
 They do no harm, they simply grow  
 And spread a shade for sleepy cows,  
 And gather birds among their bows.

They give us fruit in leaves above,  
 And wood to make our houses of,  
 And leaves to burn on Halloween  
 And in the Spring new buds of green.

They are first when day's begun  
 To touch the beams of morning sun,  
 They are the last to hold the light  
 When evening changes into night.

And when a moon floats on the sky  
 They hum a drowsy lullaby  
 Of sleepy children long ago...  
 Trees are the kindest things I know.

- The teacher is required to read the poem to the class (if resources allow, a PowerPoint slide displaying the words of the poem is recommended for students to refer back to), asking students what mood this poem evokes and similarly, what musical tonalities also evoke these moods or emotions. The teacher will note these on the board.
- Students will be asked to find various percussion instruments as well as “found” objects around the classroom that they feel create sounds or convey emotions that came to mind when listening to the poem.
  - Have students test out various objects in the room for a few minutes.
- The teacher will be required to facilitate the class in creating a piece that reflects the feeling of the poem.

**STEP FIVE**

- Task: Students will create a graphic score which represents their piece.
- The teacher will need to incorporate examples, so students are able to see the varied nature of scores from composers to composer, or even among one single composer's works.
  - R. Murray Schafer is a Canadian composer, music educator and environmentalist who is well known for his works in soundscapes as well as graphic scores.
- Divan / Shams / Tabriz is a piece written by Schafer, which can be used as an example.
- The class will work together on the board to create a score that represents their piece
  - Encourage the use of symbols for certain sounds such as x's for hard strokes and wavy lines for shaking.
  - It is recommended that the teacher take a picture of the score to display in the classroom.

**STEP SIX**

- As an exit activity, the teacher will lead the students through an exercise incorporating ABA form and their found instruments.
- Before this activity begins, the teacher will need to establish cues with the class (e.g. 1 and 2 fingers).
- The teacher will conduct in common time (4 / 4) asking that students find the beat they want to make their sound on, continuing to play on the same beat for the duration of this soundscape section – creating a loop.
- After students have settled into the first loop (A) section, cue the class to begin their second sound, which needs to be played on a different beat (B). Once students have found their sound, signal back to the first section (A).
- After students have done this exit activity, ask them what the form of their piece was.