

African Drumming: An Overview

Year 1

Aim: To introduce a variety of African chants, songs, stories and games.

To listen to the sounds of African drumming and playground songs

To learn the basic technique of hand-drumming

To learn about the djembe

To play with confidence alone, in small groups and as a class

To use the djembe as a vehicle for exploration, improvisation, composition

To perform finished pieces and talk about them using musical vocabulary

Most children will: be able to hold the drum between their knees and use a good hand stroke with which to hit the drum.

Use both hands to copy rhythmic patterns or to improvise their own

Internalise rhythmic patterns and follow changes in dynamics, pace and duration

Maintain an independent part within a large group

Perform pieces with an awareness of the other parts (ensemble, pulse)

Some will not have made so much progress and will: be able to hold the drum for short periods of time and produce a muffled or 'dead' sound.

Use one hand to copy patterns

Play a pulse or copy other patterns

Be distracted by another group's rhythm when playing in two parts

Be aware of different timbres but find it difficult to talk about them using musical language

Some children will have progressed further and will: be able to use a variety of strokes to copy and improvise different rhythmic patterns

Use both hands and produce good, ringing tone.

Maintain their own part with awareness of pulse and the patterns of the other group

Talk about the sounds using words such as 'quiet/loud, long/short, fast/slow'

Perform with confidence and awareness of balance and ensemble

Tracking Progress

Pupils recognise how sounds can be made and **changed** L1

Pupils recognise how sounds can be **organised** L2

Children use the voice in different ways (speaking, singing and chanting and perform with **awareness of others** L1

Children sing with a sense of the **shape of the melody** and perform simple **patterns and accompaniments** keeping to a **steady pulse** L2

Children **repeat short rhythmic patterns and create and choose sounds** in response to given starting points L1

Children **respond to different moods** and recognise well-defined **changes in sounds** L1

African Drumming Over view

Year 1

Week 1

Introduction

Introduction to the djembe

Clapping game- Don't clap this one back

Call and response clapping patterns- Can you tell me your name? (ta-te ta-te ta ta)

Response- my name is.....

Main

Warm-up skin of drum/hands

Copy me, bouncing off skin like a trampoline

Copy my hands as they change speed

Play 'Don't play this one back'

Repeat name game with drums

Plenary

Ask one half to play/clap the pulse whilst the other plays/ claps the rhythm,
Don't play this one back

Week 2

Introduction

Learn 'Fumje Alafia'-use table tennis bat/traffic lights to look at structure

Ask children to find ways of keeping the pulse with body actions

Can anyone clap the rhythm of the first line?

Main

Revise drumming technique

Ask half the class to play pulse whilst other half sing and play rhythm of Fumje Alafia

Swap tasks

Now play rhythm of lines on drums

Choose one line to play and sing as an ostinato

Use shakers to play the pulse

Try playing the pulse on the drums and the rhythms on the shakers

Which instrument is the loudest?

Which should play the pulse and which the rhythm?

Plenary

Play a game of 'Don't clap this one back'

Week 3

Introduction

Revise, 'Don't clap this one back' and add the rhythm, 'Walking through the jungle'

If they hear this rhythm the children should make jungle sounds/actions!

Sing the story, 'Walking through the Jungle' as call and response and ask the children to add appropriate vocal effects

Main

Look at different parts of the drum- head and practise playing right in the centre, a little to the side and then on the rim

How does the sound change?

How does the sound change if we bounce our hands high?

If we tap the skin with fingers rather than the palms of our hands?

Try walking/creeping/running/leaping/swinging/wading through the jungle

- *How do we change the way in which we play to illustrate these different movements?*
- *Which movements are slow/fast, quiet/loud, fast/slow*

Now look at the responses

- *How might we show the animals?*
- *Can we use different parts of the drums?*
- *Can we use different parts of the head?*
- *Can we use different parts of our hands/fingers?*

Plenary

Play the whole story

Children to copy the phrases of the chorus each time with appropriate stroke

And then to play the verse with improvised sound effects on the drum and vocally

Week 4

Introduction

Listen to an African playground song, 'Karamojong children's song' and try singing, 'Obwisana'.

Use the table tennis bat/traffic lights to explore the structure

Main

Read 'Handa's Hen' by Eileen Browne and invite the children to join in with the phrase, 'But where's Mondii?' (ta ta ta ta) and with the with the phrases

2 Butterflies

3 stripy mice

4 little lizards

5 sunbirds

6 jumpy crickets

7 baby bullfrogs

8 spoonbills

9 shiny starlings

10 baby chicks

Then all say, 'We've found Mondii!'

Ask one half of the class to play djembes and the pulse, 'But where's Mondii?' as a call and the other to play each of the rhythms on the shakers as a response.

Swap over

Plenary

Revise the game, 'Don't clap this one back' but only use three rhythms

'Don't clap this one back'- fold arms

'Walking through the jungle'- make jungle noises

'But where's Mondii'- say 'cheep, cheep, cheep'

Week 5

Introduction

Revise Obwisana and try tapping knees three times and then tapping the ground in front of the child to their right. Now try passing a frog around the circle in the same way- tap him on knees three times and then pass to the right on the fourth beat.

Remind the children of the story of Handa's Hen

Main

Ask the children to think of instruments on which they might play the rhythms for each creature

e.g. tambourines/jingles/cabasa/claves/shakers/guiros/castanets/ fingers on drums

Divide the children into 10 groups

Group 1 plays the call on the drums and the other groups respond in turn

Repeat this several times so children experience different instruments.

The story begins at breakfast time and ends at sunset

How might the sounds of the jungle change as the sun rises/sets?

Encourage the children to use their instruments freely to make the sounds of their animals as they wake/fall asleep by watching my hands as they draw further apart and get closer together.

Plenary

Play the children Track 11 from Spirit of African Sanctus by David Fanshawe
Which animal from the story can they hear?

Week 6

Introduction

Revise Fumje Alafia and play 'Obwisana'

Revise the rhythms from the story, 'Handa's Hen' and sort out the groups.

Give children time to try out sounds on instruments from the dawn chorus and sunset.

Try them, following my hands

Main

Perform 'Handa's Hen' with sounds for sunrise, the calls and responses from the story and then sounds from sunset.

Plenary

Talk about the sounds they have made and evaluate their effectiveness.

Talk about the calls and responses and talk about **ensemble**