



# Songwriter

## Exploring lyrics and melody

This unit develops children's ability to compose a song with an awareness of the relationship between lyrics and melody.

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**Glossary**

For definitions of musical vocabulary, click here.

[www.acblack.com/musicexpress](http://www.acblack.com/musicexpress)

For alternative themes and activities, click here!

# Songwriter

Exploring lyrics and melody



## MEDIUM TERM PLAN

Learning Objectives

Children should learn

Teaching Activities

With your class

Learning Outcomes

Children

### INTRODUCTION: HOW DOES A SONG USE LYRICS?

1 <sup>st</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what is meant by the term 'lyrics' and how they can reflect the time and place in which they were written</li> <li>that lyrics have social and cultural meaning</li> <li>how musical structures are used in song</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sing <i>Children of Africa</i> and investigate its purpose and context</li> <li>Investigate the structure of <i>Children of Africa</i></li> <li>Listen to <i>Nowhere else to go</i> and investigate its purpose and context</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify how lyrics can be used to convey mood, attitude or tell a story</li> <li>recognise that lyrics reflect the time and place in which they were composed</li> <li>recognise how lyrics often have cultural, historical and social meaning</li> <li>identify how repetition can make the words and melody easier to remember</li> <li>identify song structures</li> </ul>
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### EXPLORATION: HOW ARE LYRICS AND MELODIES USED TOGETHER IN SONGS?

2 <sup>nd</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how musical structures are used in song</li> <li>how lyrics can be generated and organised</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play the <i>Same or different game</i> to explore repetition and contrast in lyrics</li> <li>Explore repetition and contrast in melody</li> <li>Write a protest song as a class</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify song structures</li> <li>create their own lyrics based on headlines and common phrases</li> <li>create a bank of song lyric material</li> </ul>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how melody reflects the lyrics</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen to <i>Ocean of mystery</i> and compare it with previous song models</li> <li>Change the mood and rhythm of lyrics</li> <li>Compose melody lines in different moods and rhythms</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify how lyrics can be used to convey mood</li> </ul>

### BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: HOW CAN WE COMPOSE OUR OWN SONG?

4 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>about writing songs</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise what the class has learnt about songs and songwriting so far</li> <li>Explain the brief for a new group song commission</li> <li>Draft lyrics for the group song</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>compose a short song to their own lyrics</li> <li>evaluate and improve their work through discussion</li> </ul>
5 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>about writing songs</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft melody lines for the group song</li> <li>Consider an accompaniment style for the group song</li> <li>Bring it all together</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>compose a short song to their own lyrics</li> <li>evaluate and improve their work through discussion</li> </ul>
6 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>about writing songs</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the new song arrangements</li> <li>Refine the group songs using audience feedback</li> <li>Stage the <i>Yourvision Song Contest</i></li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>compose a short song to their own lyrics</li> <li>evaluate and improve their work through discussion</li> </ul>

# Songwriter

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# 1<sup>st</sup>

## LESSON PLAN

### Learning Objectives

Children should learn

- what is meant by the term 'lyrics' and how they can reflect the time and place in which they were written
- that lyrics have social and cultural meaning
- how musical structures are used in song

### Learning Outcomes

Children

- identify how lyrics can be used to convey mood, attitude or tell a story
- recognise that lyrics reflect the time and place in which they were composed
- recognise how lyrics often have cultural, historical and social meaning
- identify how repetition can make the words and melody easier to remember
- identify song structures

### RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- CD tracks: 42–43
- Copies of pages 1–2 from the *Songwriter's notebook* (CD-ROM)

### VOCABULARY:

dynamics/volume

lyrics

musical elements

phrase

pulse/beat

structure

tempo (plural tempi)

## Teaching Activities

### 1 Sing *Children of Africa* and investigate its purpose and context

The class learn a 20th century protest song in order to understand how lyrics can become a powerful tool in conveying a message.

*SUPPORT:* as you discuss the structure of a song, identify the sections, eg A B C and D as the music is playing to clarify the point.

### 2 Investigate the structure of *Children of Africa*

The children learn that the structure of the lyrics when combined with musical elements enforce the impact of the meaning of a song.


### 3 Listen to *Nowhere else to go* and investigate its purpose and context

The children examine the purpose and context of new lyrics. Through this examination they are able to develop their understanding of musical analysis and the relationship between lyrics and melody. They start creating a bank of ideas for future work.

## Lesson Extension

Listen to other recordings of songs and work out the context and purpose of the song.

# Songwriter

Exploring lyrics and melody 

# 2<sup>nd</sup>

## LESSON PLAN

### Learning Objectives

Children should learn

- how musical structures are used in song
- how lyrics can be generated and organised

### Learning Outcomes

Children

- identify song structures
- create their own lyrics based on headlines and common phrases
- create a bank of song lyric material

### RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- CD tracks: 44–48
- Copies of the *Melody maker* photocopyable (book, p36)
- Copies of page 5 (3–4 optional) from the *Songwriter's notebook* (CD-ROM)
- Tuned percussion (notes D E F G and A) or keyboards. (Optional notes C D E G A, F# G Bb C')

## Teaching Activities

### 1 Play the *Same or different* game to explore repetition and contrast in lyrics

The class learn that when writing lyrics they must achieve an agreed balance between repetition of words and new words.

### 2 Explore repetition and contrast in melody

The class learn some melodic phrases by ear and explore ordering them to create a melody.

### 3 Write a protest song as a class

The children match melody and lyrics and apply their understanding of repetition and contrast to a class song.

*SUPPORT:* encourage children to speak the words in rhythm before they sing them.


### VOCABULARY:

balance  
 lyrics  
 melodic phrase  
 melody  
 repetition  
 rhythm  
 structure

### Lesson Extension

Some children may like to make up their own melody maker phrases.

# Songwriter

Exploring lyrics and melody 

# 3<sup>rd</sup>

## LESSON PLAN

### Learning Objectives

Children should learn

- how melody reflects the lyrics

### Learning Outcomes

Children

- identify how lyrics can be used to convey mood

### RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- CD tracks: 49–50
- Copies of pages 6–7 from the *Songwriter's notebook* (CD-ROM)
- Whiteboard or chalk board
- Keyboards or tuned percussion notes:  
C D E G A  
F# G Bb C'  
D E F G A B C' D'

## Teaching Activities

### 1 Listen to *Ocean of mystery* and compare it with previous song models



The children learn about another relationship between lyrics and melody in songwriting.

### 2 Change the mood and rhythm of lyrics

The children expand their experience of word setting, focusing on the detail of rhythm and mood. They use a limited range of words.

*SUPPORT:* select and use a keyboard backing track to support the word setting activity.

### 3 Compose melody lines in different moods and rhythms



Children learn to set words and music in different styles using a limited range of notes. They recognise how musical elements can be combined and used expressively.

### VOCABULARY:

lyrics  
melody structure  
pitch movement  
strong beat  
word rhythms  
word setting

### Lesson Extension

Encourage individuals to work independently if they have strong ideas of their own.

# Songwriter

Exploring lyrics and melody



# 4<sup>th</sup>

## LESSON PLAN

### Learning Objectives

Children should learn

- about writing songs

### Learning Outcomes

Children

- compose a short song to their own lyrics
- evaluate and improve their work through discussion

### RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- Copies of the *Lyrics and melody* photocopiable (book, p39)
- Copies of pages 8–9 from the *Songwriter's notebook* (CD-ROM)

## Teaching Activities

### 1 Revise what the class has learnt about songs and songwriting so far



The class summarize their understanding of the key features of song writing so far and evaluate songs in the *Songwriters' notebook*.

### 2 Explain the brief for a new group song commission



The children begin to create a song. They plan the mood and purpose and generate lyrics.

*SUPPORT: a group may have strong feelings about other subjects for a song and may be encouraged to explore them.*

### 3 Draft lyrics for the group song



They apply what they have learnt in the unit so far, outlining a structure and the balance of repetition and contrast. They share the work with the class for analysis and evaluation.

### VOCABULARY:

accompaniment  
 balance  
 lyrics  
 melody  
 pitch movement  
 structure  
 word rhythms  
 word setting

### Lesson Extension

Invite children to bring in songs and explain through analysis how the lyrics and the music work successfully.

# Songwriter

Exploring lyrics and melody

**5<sup>th</sup>**

## LESSON PLAN

### Learning Objectives

*Children should learn*

- about writing songs

### Learning Outcomes

*Children*

- compose a short song to their own lyrics
- evaluate and improve their work through discussion

### RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- CD tracks: 42–44, 49, 51
- Copies of the *Lyrics and melody* photocopiable (book, p39)
- Copies of page 10 from the *Songwriter's songbook* (CD-ROM)
- Tuned percussion or keyboards, notes as before (lesson 2).

## Teaching Activities

### 1 Draft melody lines for the group song



The children learn to set four lines of words and music, using a limited range of notes. They recognise how musical elements can be combined and used expressively.

### 2 Consider an accompaniment style for the group song



The class refer to the accompaniments to the songs they have explored and they compose an accompaniment to their own song.

*SUPPORT: a keyboard may be useful in providing a suitable accompaniment.*

### 3 Bring it all together

The children listen to each other's work. They analyse and discuss each emerging song.

### VOCABULARY:

accompaniment

drone

lyrics

ostinato (plural *ostinatos/ostinati*)


pulse/beat

tuned percussion

### Lesson Extension

Use computer sequencing software to build up an accompaniment to the groups' songs.

# Songwriter

Exploring lyrics and melody 

# 6<sup>th</sup>

## LESSON PLAN

### Learning Objectives

Children should learn

- about writing songs

### Learning Outcomes

Children

- compose a short song to their own lyrics
- evaluate and improve their work through discussion

### RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- Recording equipment
- Tuned percussion/ keyboards as before
- Copies of page 11 from the *Songwriter's notebook* (CD-ROM)
- Certificates from the *Songwriter's notebook* (CD-ROM p12)

## Teaching Activities

### 1 Complete the new song arrangements

The children sing their songs with expression, in tune to a simple accompaniment. They evaluate their work to improve it.

*SUPPORT: check that everyone understands that the analysis and comments are intended to be positive and that they should not be taken personally.*

### 2 Refine the group songs using audience feedback

The children have an opportunity to analyse, evaluate and improve their work.

### 3 Stage the *Yourvision Song Contest*

The class perform their completed songs to a panel of judges and are awarded certificates in recognition of their achievements.

### VOCABULARY:

accompaniment

lyrics

melody

### Lesson Extension

Select a chorus or part of a verse of a song to teach the audience at the contest.



# Glossary

## accent

a stress or extra push on a note to emphasise it and make it sound slightly louder

## accompaniment

the underlying sounds used to support a melody line

## acoustic sound

any sound made without electronic amplification or processing

## articulation

the formation of clear and distinct sounds

## attack

the way a sound starts, usually described in terms of hard/fast or soft/slow

## balance

the appropriate relative volume of the parts

## bass

the lowest part in a musical composition/the lowest note in a chord

## body percussion

sounds that can be made using parts of the body, eg clapping, tapping knees ...

## call and response

the call may differ, but the response is always the same

## chord

three or more notes played at the same time

## chord sequence

two or more chords played one after the other in a deliberate order

## cluster

a group of notes that are close in pitch and sounded together

## coda

end section

## conductor

the person elected to lead the group

## cue

a musical signal used to control aspects of the piece, eg starting and stopping or changing speed

## cyclic pattern

a melodic or rhythmic pattern that repeats itself over and over again

## decay

the time a sound takes to die away, usually described in terms of long or short

## drone

a sound, or sounds, played constantly throughout all or part of a piece as an accompaniment

## drum machine

a piece of musical hardware which contains drum sounds and enables sounds to be sequenced and layered

## duration

the word used in music to refer to the length of a sound or silence

## dynamics/volume

the volume of the music, usually described in terms of loud/quiet

## electronic music

music produced entirely by electronic means

## ensemble

performance by a group

## entry point

point in a round when the next performer may begin

## expression

when a singer or instrumentalist sings or plays with feeling, using changes in dynamics, tempo and timbre

## free/arhythmic

music which has no discernible steady beat

## glockenspiel

a tuned percussion instrument with metal bars

## graphic notation

a form of notation in which the composer freely invents symbols which give an impression of sound

## graphic score

a score in which musical intention is recorded by means of graphic notation

## harmony

any number of changing layers of sound, sung or played at the same time

## improvise

inventing music as you go along

## improvisation

music invented as you go along

## jazz

a style of music which originated in the 19th century characterised by use of improvisation

## layers

individual lines of music performed together to create texture

## layering

the process of creating texture by combining layers of sound

## lyrics

the words of a song

## melody instrument

usually refers to an instrument which plays a single line of melody, eg clarinet, recorder, flute

## melodic phrase

a short section of melody

## metre

the grouping of beats into twos, threes, fours, etc. Waltz music is grouped in threes: ①2 3 ①2 3

## musical elements

pitch, rhythm, timbre, dynamics, tempo, duration, texture, structure (see definitions)

## notation

ways of writing music down

## orchestration

the specific instruments chosen by a composer to perform the different parts of a piece of music

## ostinato (plural ostinatos/ostinati)

a short rhythmic or melodic pattern that is repeated over and over

## phrase

a short section of music

## pitch

refers to the complete range of sounds in music from the lowest to the highest

## pitch movement

the steps and jumps by which melody moves up and down

## polyrhythm

more than one rhythm played at the same time

### prelude

a substantial musical introduction to a piece

### processed sound

a sound that has been changed by means of an electronic device

### pulse/beat

pulse and beat are used synonymously to refer to the regular heartbeat of the music - the 'steady beat'

### rest

a silence

### rhythm

patterns of long and short sounds played within a steady beat

### rhythmical

music which is underpinned by a steady beat

### riff

a repeated pattern

### rondo

a musical structure which alternates contrasting sections of music with repeated sections, eg A B A C A D A

### round

a piece of music in which two or more performers or groups start one after the other. As each performer reaches the end of the music, they start again - the music going round and round - hence the name

### sampling

the act of recording sounds, digitally encoding them and altering them electronically

### score

all the parts of a piece written down

### soundmaker

any sound source used as a musical instrument

### soundscape

a picture in sound

### strong beat

any accentuated beat or beats, usually the first in the group, eg ①2 3 ①2 3

### structure

most music is underpinned by a structure which may be as simple as beginning, middle and end

### synthesising

the process of creating new sounds electronically

### tempo (plural tempi)

the speed at which music is performed, usually described in terms of fast/slow

### texture

layers of sound, eg the two layers of sound created by a melody accompanied by a drum beat

### timbre

quality of sound, eg squeaky. All instruments, including voices, have a particular sound quality which is referred to as timbre

### triad

refers to a particular type of three note chord, examples of which are C major (C E G) or A minor (A C E)

### tuned

pitched

### tuned percussion

the family of instruments which includes chime bar, glockenspiel, hand chime, metallophone, tubular bell, xylophone

### unison

when everyone sings or chants the same thing at the same time

### untuned

of indefinite pitch

### untuned percussion

percussion instruments which make sounds of indefinite pitch

### volume

see dynamics

### word rhythms

rhythms created in the course of saying a word, or by creating a pattern of words which may be repeated, making a rhythm

### word setting

how the words relate to the music

### xylophone

a tuned percussion instrument with wooden bars