



THE PENTATONIC SCALE

Learning Outcomes

LEARNING OUTCOMES: The Students will be able to:

- Understand that a Pentatonic Scale is constructed of 5 notes
- Sing and perform a simple Pentatonic Melody with accuracy of rhythm and awareness of phrasing
- Compose a Knock Knock joke using the notes of a Pentatonic Scale
- Sing and perform taking a leading role in group performances
- Perform the chords of C, G, Am, D
- Comment on the effectiveness of own and other's work
- Notate and perform simple Pentatonic melodic dictations
- Present a class performance of My Girl
- Listen to and comment on a variety of works that use the Pentatonic Scale
- Improvise Solos using the Pentatonic Scale.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

STARTER ACTIVITY 1: MELODIC ECHOS

- Issue each student with a melodic instrument (either a Keyboard, Glockenspiel or perhaps an instrument that they play like Flute or Sax—remember to make the necessary transposition for those instruments.
- Using only the 5 notes of the C Pentatonic Scale (C, D, E, G, A, and top C if you like), play a one bar Motif using Crotchets and Quavers. Ask the students to repeat this Motif. (Suggestion—if your students are new to this style of teaching then guide them by telling them you are only going to start using the first two notes and build them up to five notes and top C.)

STARTER ACTIVITY 2: KNOCK KNOCK!

- Using notes of the Pentatonic Scale (C, D, E, G & A) , pupils set a Knock, Knock! joke to music.
- Begin by dividing the class into pairs.
- Each pair will need their melodic instrument and a Knock Knock Joke. You can give the students specific jokes or they may have their own that they can use. (there are a few suggested jokes on the worksheet)
- Ask the students to practice saying the joke with their partner taking turns to say each line of the joke. Encourage them to pay attention to the natural rhythm of the speech they are using.
- Next, ask the students to use the notes of the Pentatonic Scale to melodically play their joke, one note per syllable. Encourage them to perform it as a conversation, taking turns to play each line of the joke as they did when they were saying it to each other. Use the worksheet to record their melodies.
- Ask each pair to present their spoken joke first and then their Pentatonic interpretation.
- Spend a few minutes questioning the students as to the point of the activity—try to encourage them to discover that the joke didn't have a pulse, although some may have given it a pulse naturally. Also encourage them to realise that not all the melodic lines seemed to make sense musically. Ask them why and hopefully they will come up with answers like there was no pulse and no Structure.

LISTENING, WRITING AND PRACTICAL:

- Issue handout "Pentatonic Riffs". If you are not confident to play the melodies on the piano, **Track 1** has two playings of each pattern. Dictate these to the students.
- Allow the students plenty of time to practice these melodies.
- As a class, play through the melodies making sure the students have the correct rhythm and notes.



**WRITING AND PERFORMANCE:**

- SCORE READING: Issue handout “My Girl –The Temptations”. Score read using the classroom arrangement. Display for the students on OHT or PPT or copy for students. Identify the different sections—EG Section A Verse 1 etc. Follow through the activities on the sheet.
- Issue the parts and practice the classroom arrangement. On the CD, there is an accompaniment that the students can play along with.

Track 2—Accompaniment and Vocal—BPM 110

Track 3—Accompaniment only—BPM 95

Track 4—Accompaniment only—BPM 110

COMPOSITION / IMPROVISED SOLO:

- Divide the class into two groups and explain that they are now going to create their own improvised Solo. Put Section E on OHT, PPT or copy for students to see. Identify the two chords and write out their Pentatonic Scales for reference. Explain that they can only use those notes in those bars—for Eg G chord only use G pentatonic.
- Either play the accompaniment yourself on the Piano or you can use **Track 5** on the CD. It has a two bar intro with the Solo section played twice and the ending. Ask the students to practice improvising a Solo as a whole class over the 8 bars. Yes it will be noisy but it does help the students to gain confidence.
- As a class, practice the performance of My Girl. For more advanced students, you can divide into groups and they can perform as a small Combo with multiple Solos. Allow adequate time for your students to successfully complete the task. Take the time to either video or record the results. It is the best kind of feedback.

FEEDBACK AND REFLECTION:

Issue handout “Pentatonic Scale—Review”.

Give the students plenty of time to complete the activities unaided.

Collect and review if you choose.

FINAL LISTENING—Listening to the Pagodes

Play **Track 6**, and extract from “The Pagodes” by Debussy. Ask the students to complete the activities.