



SmashBeats

TODAY'S ACTIVITY

2. Rhythm Pieces from Words

WHO IS THIS ACTIVITY FOR?

Students in years 5 - 7

WHO CAN LEAD THIS ACTIVITY?

Class teacher, music specialist or instrumental teacher

WHAT WILL STUDENTS LEARN?

Words can create rhythm patterns and sounds that can be used as the basis for a composition

WHAT DO WE NEED?

- Words. These could be carefully chosen e.g. from a poem or book. However, words which are chosen quite randomly, (e.g. from a game of word association or newspaper headlines) often work very effectively. Words which have a tongue-twister quality, or an interesting vowel sound, work particularly well
- Tuned / untuned instruments

THE ACTIVITY

1. Explore the rhythms and sound qualities of different words

Example: *A meteorite hit Russia and the sound of the explosion was heard halfway around the world* - Students should explore the rhythms and sounds entirely vocally. As a class, let the pupils choose the words they would like to explore. Divide the class into groups of about four. Let each group develop the vocal sound of one word. The teacher can support the exploration and offer ideas if the learners need it.

(The word **meteorite** has a distinctive rhythm. **Hit** is almost onomatopoeic. Allow pupils to explore the sibilant sound of **Russia** and maybe try saying the word very slowly. The word **explosion** could build in dynamic (crescendo). The word **halfway** could be verbalised with a big gap between half and way. The vowel sound of the word **world** could be explored etc.)

Let each group try and copy the rhythms and sounds for their word on their instruments.

2. Use the rhythms and sounds to create a composition

Each group performs the instrumental version of their word to the rest of the class. The class should decide an order in which they would like the words performed, one after another, maybe with some repeats of words. Different groups' words could be performed simultaneously to create layers.

Words can be introduced and removed at different times with the teacher acting as a conductor.

A more formal structure could be set up, e.g. the word **meteorite** could be used as a repeated pattern (ostinato or riff)

WHAT WILL WE ASSESS?

- Students will understand that different words have different rhythmic and sonic potential
- Students will be able to copy the characteristics of vocalised words on their instruments
- Students will make decisions about how to put together different instrumental versions of words to create a class composition