

Teacher Guide: Music Speaks

Year 6 · Unit 1

Introduction

This teacher guide identifies musical learning and presents **I can statements** to support assessment. The **I can statements** show what successful learning looks like for teachers and feels like for children. The guide provides an **overview** of the unit content, the resources needed to teach the unit and offers some **key teaching strategies** to support successful teaching and learning.

The online Charanga resources for the whole unit are in the **Teacher Guide Resources**. Using these resources and this **Teacher Guide**, teachers may confidently plan their own series of lessons. To support such a planning process, each **Teacher Guide** offers six week-by-week summaries of teaching and learning based on the resources listed.

Unit Lesson Plans

Creative Music Scheme units also include a thorough series of lesson plans in a single **Lesson Plans** document to support a flexible and engaging approach to teaching the unit. Lessons are presented in sets of 2 weeks, and each lesson plan suggests a range of activities to choose from to meet the learning objectives of the 2 weeks. Over a year, the activities collectively reflect an outstanding, creative and inclusive curriculum that teaches musical skills and musical knowledge in a way that children can understand.

Every school allocates its own timeframe for music teaching and learning; therefore, select the activities that best meet the children's learning needs and your teaching. A main activity does not have to be hurried; enjoy spending time creating a quality musical experience by working through fewer main activities thoroughly.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, children will be able to:

1. Create and produce music with multiple sections that include repetition and contrasts.
2. Use chord changes as part of a (sequenced) composition.

I Can Statements

- I can set up a project in a suitable hip-hop key and program a foundational drum beat using kicks, snares, and hi-hats.
- I can compose a chord sequence, original melodies and basslines that fit a chosen key using virtual instruments and the piano roll.
- I can import audio samples and apply sound effects, such as risers, EQ, and delay, to enhance my track.
- I can arrange my composition by looping, duplicating, and removing sections to build an engaging song structure.
- I can mix my track by adjusting the volume of each element to create a clear and balanced final sound.
- I can take creative control over my music, making artistic decisions to produce and save a complete hip-hop track.

Unit Overview

This unit introduces children to Hip-Hop music as a modern musical genre. Children explore the rhythmic, lyrical, and structural features of Hip Hop through listening and composing. Activities develop confidence in rhythm, flow, and expressive composition while encouraging creativity and collaboration.

Children study the relationship between beats, basslines, and rap lyrics, culminating in a performance of their own hip hop-inspired compositions. The unit also encourages reflection on contemporary urban culture, storytelling, and musical identity, supporting cross-curricular learning in English, history, and social studies.

YuStudio (DAW) Access and Lesson Approach

YuStudio can be accessed on tablets or laptops by creating a student group and sharing the resource with the class. Full guidance is available in the CPD and Training Centre in the training session called **Empower Your Students: Teacher's Guide To Student Logins**, located in the Getting To Know Charanga category.

If individual devices are available, support children to work independently, in pairs, or in small groups, whether in the classroom, school computer suite or at a local library. If devices are limited, demonstrate YuStudio at the front of the class and engage children collaboratively by inviting them, one at a time, to contribute elements of the composition, such as adding a kick drum, snare, hi-hats, or bassline. This approach ensures that lessons remain flexible, interactive, and collaborative, allowing all children to participate in building a Hip-Hop track.

Resources Needed

- Headphones for personal listening and playback (optional)

Weekly Suggestions

Week 1: Introduction to Hip Hop and Rhythm

Explore Hip Hop music, introduce children to the origins and key features of Hip Hop, and provide the background and context needed to appreciate and create their own beats. Children learn to listen actively and identify rhythm, beat, and bassline patterns in classic Hip-Hop tracks, such as **"Rapper's Delight"** by The Sugarhill Gang.

Week 2: Building Beats With Max Wheeler

Building on Week 1, develop an understanding of essential musical concepts, including tempo, bar, loop, and groove. Through this hands-on exploration, children gain practical experience in creating simple Hip-Hop beats using kick, snare, and hi-hat, and begin to experiment with layering and variations to express creativity within the distinctive style and structure of Hip-Hop music.

Week 3: Adding Melody and Chords

Building on the foundation of rhythm and beats, children explore melody and harmony in Hip Hop. They learn to create simple chord progressions and add a melody over their beats, experimenting with note placement, pitch, and harmony. Children develop an understanding of how melody interacts with rhythm to enhance the mood and character of a Hip Hop track.

Week 4: Arranging Your Track and Adding Vocals

Developing further, children focus on arranging their tracks into sections such as intro, verse, chorus, and bridge. Children learn how to integrate rap or vocal samples and explore layering techniques, ensuring balance between beats, melody, and vocals. This week encourages independent decision-making and creative development as children refine their Hip Hop compositions.

Week 5: Mixing and Applying Effects

Children focus on refining their Hip Hop tracks by adjusting volumes, adding effects, and enhancing sound design. They learn how to use mixing techniques such as EQ, delay, and risers to create balance and excitement within their tracks. This week emphasises experimentation and critical listening as children develop their skills in producing polished, dynamic music.

Week 6: Showcase and Reflection

In the final week, the children perform and share their completed Hip-Hop tracks in a supportive and celebratory environment. They reflect on their creative decisions, evaluate how melody, rhythm, and vocals interact, and discuss what they have learned about composition, arrangement, and mixing. This week highlights independent decision-making, creative development, and confidence in performing and sharing musical work.

Key Teaching Strategies for Success

- **Active Listening and Appraisal** – Encourage children to listen critically to Hip-Hop tracks, identifying rhythm, melody, vocal delivery, and instrumentation to inform their own compositions.
- **Step-by-Step Modelling** – Demonstrate each stage of track creation, from beat-making to mixing and adding effects, giving clear, scaffolded instructions before children work independently.
- **Guided Practice and Feedback** – Circulate during activities to provide individual support, prompt reflection, and offer constructive suggestions to help children improve their tracks.
- **Creative Experimentation** – Encourage children to try different sounds, melodies, and arrangements, fostering innovation and independent decision-making in their compositions.
- **Celebration and Reflection** – Provide regular opportunities for sharing work, performing tracks, and reflecting on creative choices, reinforcing confidence, collaboration, and musical understanding.

Conclusion

This teacher guide provides a structured framework for the Music Speak, Studio Hip-Hop Project, focusing on listening and composing. Children develop confidence in rhythmic, melodic, and expressive composition through collaboration and reflection on their work. The unit culminates in a performance of original Hip-Hop-inspired compositions, deepening understanding of contemporary music, musical identity, and creative collaboration.