**Circus Project for Years 1 and 2**

**By Kate Knight**

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[](https://www.google.com/url?url=https://www.etsy.com/listing/61758704/boutique-machine-applique-circus&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ved=0ahUKEwjFhNrwrJPKAhVBnRoKHUcTAv8QwW4IKDAJ&usg=AFQjCNFiVQmvO9UodPR1grSimRO2wsqsEw)

**Overview of Project**

**During this project the children will**

* Sing songs
* Move and play to songs and chants
* Explore percussion instruments and learn how to play them
* Explore pulse and rhythm
* Identify instruments by their timbre
* Listen to music and comment upon what they hear
* Follow signs and symbols
* Select and organize sounds and symbols into sequences (Year 1)
* Select and organize sounds and symbols into sequences and layers (Year 2)
* Explore texture
* Comment on the sounds they choose

**Some children will (emerge)**

* Move to a steady beat when modelling their actions on those of others
* Play to a steady beat with some help
* Follow signs and symbols with the help of those around them
* Identify a shaken, tapped or scraped sound
* Select and organize sounds with some help
* Express their likes and dislikes

**Some children will (achieve)**

* Move to a steady beat
* Play to a steady beat
* Follow signs and symbols
* Identify a variety of sounds (Year 1 &2)
* Identify sequences of 2 or 3 sounds (Year 2)
* Select and organize sounds
* Express their likes and dislikes
* Comment upon the selection of sounds

**Some children will (exceed)**

* Move to a steady or changing beat
* Play to a steady or changing beat
* Copy and create rhythmic patterns
* Play a rhythm over a steady beat (Year 2)
* Follow signs and symbols in large and small groups
* Identify a wide range of sounds (Year 1 &2)
* Identify sequences of 3 or 4 sounds (Year 2)
* Select and organize sounds with awareness of effect
* Express and discuss their likes and dislikes
* Comment upon the selection of sounds and how improvements might be made

**Circus Assessment Year 1**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of child** | **Can move to a steady beat** | **Can play to a steady beat** | **Can select/identify instrumental timbre** | **Can follow signs and symbols** | **Can organize sequences of sound** |
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**3 = emerging 2 = achieving 1 = exceeding**

**Circus Assessment Year 2**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of child** | **Can move and play to a steady beat** | **Can play rhythmic patterns** | **Can maintain an independent part in large groups** | **Can organize and follow symbols in sequences and layers** | **Can select, combine and organize sounds** |
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**3 = emerging 2 = achieving 1 = exceeding**

**Lesson 1: 30-40mins**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

About rhythm and pulse

To listen to recorded music

A new singing game

How circus performers move

The names of instruments

How to play instruments with correct technique

To play in groups (Year 2)

**Introductory activity (15mins)**

Sing, ‘Hello children’ (GEGE) and ask the children to say and clap the pattern (***rhythm***) of their names.

(Extension for Year 2: Ask one half of the circle to tap a steady ***beat/pulse*** on their knees while the other half clap the rhythm of their names)

Play the children ‘Circus Music’ by Aaron Copland (Let’s Go Zudieo) but do not tell them what the music is about or its name.

Ask the children to describe the sounds and what might be happening during the piece.

Ask questions such as

* *Is this music for sleeping to (a lullaby)?*
* *Is this sad or happy music?*
* *Are the sounds fast or slow?*
* *Are the sounds always the same or do they change or even stop?*
* *What could you do to these sounds-march, jump, dance or something else?*

Explain to the children that this piece was written to show a musical picture of circus performers.

Play a game of ‘Hey, hey, look at me’ (GEGGE) from Singing Games and Rhymes for Early Years and ask children to think of who performs at the circus and how they might move.

E.g. A trapeze artist balances (I am balancing can’t you see? /GGeeAGGE)

Other suggestions might be juggling, wobbling or riding, walking or tottering, swinging or swaying, rolling or jumping and laughing or splatting!

(Ask individual Year 2 children to volunteer to sing a verse by themselves)

**Main activity (15-20mins)**

Lay out groups of tambours, tambourines, triangles, bells, shakers, woodblocks, claves and cymbals.

Remind the children what the names of the percussion instruments are and how you play them by singing the song, ‘Choose an Instrument’ (Bobby Shaftoe, clap your hands).

Ask the children to tap a steady pulse on their knees as they sing the song and then pass a beater around the ring.

The child with the beater chooses an instrument and the children around him/her also play that instrument. Check the name and how to play it.

Repeat this until all the children have instruments and then sing, ‘We can play our instruments’.

(Extension for Year 2: Ask the group that has just chosen the new instrument to play the rhythm of the words e.g. ‘We can play the tambourine’, whilst the other children tap or play a steady beat.)

**Plenary (5mins)**

Ask the children what their favourite sound was today and the name of the instrument.

Sing, ‘Goodbye children’ (GEGE)

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Copy sung phrases

Move to a steady beat

Play to a steady beat

Play rhythmic patterns (Yr2)

Identify the character or mood of a piece of music

Play with control

**Lesson 2: 30-40mins**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

About timbre

Good playing technique

The names of some unusual instruments

To identify hidden sounds

A new song

**Introductory activity (15mins)**

Sing, ‘Hello children’ and look at a selection of instruments on the floor.

*How could we group them? (By material, colour, sound or by the way in which we played them)*

Make sure the children are introduced to some more unusual sounds e.g. the chatterbox and stirring drum and then ask volunteers to help sort the sounds into those that are tapped, shaken or scraped.

Show the class some signs for tapping (two fingers tapped together), shaking (two hands shaken) and scraping (one hands rubbing up and down the fore-arm) and ask them to copy those different actions and then make them go faster and slower.

Ask volunteers to stand in front of three groups and to lead them in this activity.

**Main activity (20mins)**

Play ‘Favourite Instruments’ from ‘Michael Finnigin, tap your chinnigin’.

Repeat the game several times so that the children experience playing many different instruments, checking each time that they know if they are to tap, shake or scrape their sounds and how to hold/play them.

Repeat the tapping/shaking/scraping game using three new volunteers and asking the children to follow their conductor using the instruments.

Hide some of the instruments and ask the children to identify the hidden sounds (Year 1)/ a sequence of hidden sounds (Year 2).

Explain to the children that each of these instruments has its own sound colour or ***timbre.***

This means that we should be able to identify the sound, even if the instrument played is hidden.

Leave one of each instrument out and then hide another.

Play, ‘I have sounds, one and two’ (Bobby Shaftoe, clap your hands) and ask the children to identify one sound (Year 1) or a sequence of two or three sounds (Year 2)

**Plenary (5mins)**

Next week it will be important to choose the right sound colour to go with or illustrate our circus performers.

Sing, ‘Goodbye children’ (GEGE)

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Sing tunefully and confidently

Move to a steady beat

Play to a steady beat with control

Name and play percussion instruments

Follow signs for play/stop, faster/slower

Talk about the timbre of instrumental sounds

**Lesson 3: 30-40mins**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

About timbre

About texture

About pulse (and rhythm Yr 2)

About sound and symbol

**Introductory activity (10mins)**

Sing, ‘Hello children’ (GEGE) and play, ‘Have you brought your happy/sad/grumpy/excited/sleepy/robot/singing voice?’ They answer, ‘Yes, I have’ in the same ***timbre***

Talk about the different voices they used and introduce the word, ‘timbre’.

**Main activity (25mins)**

Show the children the circus cards from week 1 and use the tune, ‘Jenny lies a-weeping’ or ‘Don’t put your muck in our dustbin!’ to sing the following words.

I’m walking on a tightrope, a tightrope, a tightrope (jingles)

I’m walking on a tightrope, a tightrope so high.

I’m swinging on a trapeze etc. (tambourine shaken)

I’m in a trapeze, a trapeze so high

I’m juggling with some bright balls etc. (triangles)

I’m juggling with some bright balls, try to catch them

I’m wobbling on a tricycle etc. (clatterpillar/guiro)

I’m wobbling on a tricycle, please don’t fall off!

I’m jumping on a see-saw etc. (chatterbox/cymbal)

I’m jumping on a see-saw to make my friend fly!

I’m splatting a big pie, a pie, a pie (tambour)

I’m splatting a big pie into a clown’s face!

Ask the children to keep a steady pulse as they sing the words

e.g.

I’m **swing**ing on a **trap**eze, a **trap**eze, a **trap**eze

I’m **swing**ing on a **trap**eze, a **trap**eze so **high**

Then discuss which instrument might illustrate that movement/sound best and play those sounds to accompany each of the six verses (see suggestions in brackets)

***Assess: Can move and play to a steady beat (Yr 1&2)***

**Extension for Year 2:** Ask the children to say, clap and then play the rhythm of the words, ‘walking on a tightrope/swinging on a trapeze/ juggling with some bright balls/wobbling on a tricycle/splatting with a big pie’

*Can they play them in groups whilst the rest of the class are singing the words?*

*Which of the rhythms is different from the others? (Wobbling on a tricycle)*

***Assess: Can play rhythmic patterns (Yr 2)***

Ask each group to play their instrument when their picture card is held up.

Experiment with holding up two cards.

*Can the other children listen to the combination of sounds and comment on whether they like them or not?*

If time, stick a sequence of picture cards up on the board and ask the children to follow them

**Plenary (5mins)**

Pack the instruments away and ask the children what made them choose the different instruments to illustrate each of the verses (*the sound or timbre*).

When two or more sounds are played at once they create ***a texture.***

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Copy and explore vocal qualities

Move to a steady beat

Play to a steady beat

Play rhythmic patterns (Yr 2)

Follow symbols

Talk about timbre and texture

**Lesson 4: 30-40mins**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

To listen to music attentively

To create movements to suit the character of recorded music

To respond to aural and visual prompts

To organize sounds within a small group

**Introductory activity (5mins)**

Sing, ‘Hello children’ and show the children the pictures of the circus performers

* Acrobats
* Jugglers
* Clowns
* Trapeze artists
* Tightrope walkers
* The Circus master

**Main activity (20mins)**

Ask the children to listen to Circus Music by Aaron Copland and to respond to the sounds with any actions which they think appropriate from the circus.

They should remember that the first section is slightly lower and smoother and the second faster and more exciting.

When they hear a ‘da-daa’ they should freeze and pretend to be the ring master.

*Notice who changes from Tightrope walker, acrobat and trapeze artist to juggler and clown.*

Discuss their actions with the children and remind them of how they added sounds to each of the acts last week.

This week they will receive a selection of sounds but will need to work co-operatively together in order to organize them within a small group.

Give out

* Jingles and shakers to the tightrope walkers
* Tambourines and guiros to the trapeze artists
* Triangles and claves to the jugglers
* Cymbals and clatterpillars to the acrobats
* Tambours and chatterboxes to the clowns

Give the children time to organize the sounds and to decide whether they will all play together or build up in layers. Will they all play the same beat or will some play different rhythms.

E.g. I am the acrobat, throwing a custard pie, ready, steady, splat!

**Plenary (10mins)**

Ask children to note down their names and the rhythms they have used on their composition sheet and then listen to work in progress as their card is shown.

*Which was their favourite group and why?*

*Who has some suggestions of how they could improve their work next week?*

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Respond to aural prompts in order make and change their movements

Work co-operatively and creatively in groups

Create and play simple rhythmic patterns

Organise sounds

Express preferences and suggest improvements

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**Our Character is an Acrobat**

**In our group are…………………………………………….**

**………………………………………………………………………….**

**…………………………………………………………………………**

**Our rhythms are…………………………………………**

**………………………………………………………………………..**

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**Our Character is a Trapeze Artist**

**In our group are…………………………………………….**

**………………………………………………………………………….**

**…………………………………………………………………………**

**Our rhythms are…………………………………………**

**………………………………………………………………………..**

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**Our Character is an Tightrope Walker**

**In our group are…………………………………………….**

**………………………………………………………………………….**

**…………………………………………………………………………**

**Our rhythms are…………………………………………**

**………………………………………………………………………..**

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**Our Character is a Juggler**

**In our group are…………………………………………….**

**………………………………………………………………………….**

**…………………………………………………………………………**

**Our rhythms are…………………………………………**

**………………………………………………………………………..**

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**Our Character is a Clown**

**In our group are…………………………………………….**

**………………………………………………………………………….**

**…………………………………………………………………………**

**Our rhythms are…………………………………………**

**………………………………………………………………………..**

**………………………………………………………………………..**

**………………………………………………………………………..**

**Lesson 5: 30-40mins**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

About timbre and texture

To work in groups

To make up rhythmic phrases (Yr 2)

To copy rhythmic phrases (Yr 1)

To follow symbols

**Introductory activity** **(15mins)**

Sing, ‘Hello children’ and ask all the children to say and clap, ‘My name is…’

Each of their voices has a slightly different sound.

Now ask them all to clap the rhythm, ’My name is…’ together. They all used the same sound and put them together.

*Could the different rhythms be heard? (No)*

Use three volunteers and choose three different types of body percussion on which to perform their rhythm e.g. clicking, tapping and stamping.

*Could the different rhythms be heard (Yes)*

***They were creating a texture of sounds using three different sound colours or timbre.***

Introduce the game, ‘Building Layers’ with new words. (Tune: Dusty Bluebells)

*Move your hands to keep them clapping*

*Use your feet and keep them tapping*

*Add a click to stop you napping*

*Building up in layers*

Ask the children to keep a steady pulse using claps, taps and clicks altogether and then try this in groups, accumulatively.

**Main activity (20mins)**

Remind the children of their groups and how they were using the instruments to create sounds to illustrate the picture of their circus performer.

Today the will be given (Year 1)/make up (Year 2) a rhythmic pattern to play on their instruments as well as some of the children continuing to make the sounds that they explored last week.

Suggested phrases

* Jumping acrobats/standing on one hand/bouncing very high
* Juggling balls/throwing and catching/lots of colourful ball in the air
* Funny clowns, laughing clowns/watch out for a custard pie/wobbling on a tricycle
* Swinging through the air/graceful and high/swishing and swirling
* Balancing carefully/holding arms out wide/treading lightly on the wire

Give the children time to practice their rhythms and to decide who will play them and who will make the other sounds

Listen to each group in turn and discuss their sounds and how they were combined.

**Assess: Can play rhythmic patterns**

**Plenary (10mins)**

Ask each group to play when their card is held up.

Stick the cards on the board and make a sequence of sounds.

The stick another row of cards below and ask two groups to play at once.

Discuss the combinations of sounds and ask the children to decide on which groups should play together.

**Assess: Can follow symbols in sequences and layers**

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Play rhythmic patterns with control

Maintain a part in large groups

Follow cards and symbols

Comment on the combination and effectiveness of sounds

**Lesson 6: 30-40mins**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

About timbre and texture

How to play in groups

How to talk about sounds using musical vocabulary

**Introductory activity (15mins)**

Sing ‘Hello children’ and ask them to clap the rhythm of their names.

Play, ‘Have you brought your…voice’ and talk about the different sounds or *timbre* of some of the voices they copied.

Revise the game, ‘Move your hands’

*Move your hands to keep them clapping*

*Use your feet and keep them tapping*

*Add a click to stop you napping*

*Building up in layers*

Try the sounds individually in groups and then combine them. Discuss the effect or *texture.*

**Main activity (20mins)**

Ask each group to clap and play the rhythm they made up the previous week.

Then ask them to play it when their symbol is held up.

Put some groups together and discuss the effect.

**Assess: Can maintain an independent part**

Ask the children to follow the cards in a sequence and then put cards in two rows.

Discuss the effect of two groups playing together (Texture) and decide on an order and combination of sounds.

**Plenary (5mins)**

Perform and record the effect.

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Perform actions and rhythms in groups

Discuss their preferences

Follow symbols

Play rhythmic patterns accurately

**Lesson 7:30-40mins**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

About timbre

About texture

A new song

To select sounds

To layer and combine sounds

To play in groups

**Introductory activity (10mins)**

Sing, ‘Hello children’ and ask the children to think of a new way in which to mark the rhythm of ‘My name is…’ e.g. clapping, tapping or clicking

Listen to each in turn and then try layering the sound accumulatively

**Main activity (20mins)**

Show the children a selection of instruments that they may be using later in the lesson and play the game, ‘One sound can be heard when we’re at the circus’.

Identical sounds will be hidden and the children will need to identify them individually, two at a time, three at a time and four at a time.

When one sounds is played they will recognize its sound colour or *timbre.*

When more than one sound is played they make a *texture of sounds.*

Introduce the song ‘Circus Time’ (Tune: Head, shoulders, knees and toes)

*Ladies* ***swinging*** *very high, very high*

*Clowns* ***wobbling*** *on their trikes, riding by*

*Then there’s* ***juggling*** *balls and men on* ***stilts*** *so tall*

***Lots of sounds*** *its circus time, circus time*

*Men* ***standing*** *on one hand, on one hand*

*Drummers* ***playing*** *in a band, in a band*

*Then there’s tightrope* ***walks*** *and ring master* ***talks***

***Lots of sounds*** *its circus time, circus time.*

Ask the children to think about the words that might suggest sounds or actions and to think of instruments or vocal sounds to illustrate them.

E.g. tambourines, stirring drums, shakers, claves, tambours, triangles and jingles.

If time, add the sounds to the song in 6 groups, with all the children ‘***talking’*** and playing together on ***‘Lots of sounds’.***

**Plenary (5mins)**

Pack away the instruments and talk about the effect of playing all the sounds at once.

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Identify instrumental sounds

Identify combinations of sounds

Sing tunefully and confidently

Talk about their preferences

**Lesson 8:30-40mins**

**Learning Intentions:** Children learn

A new game

To explore vocal, instrumental and body sounds

To add sounds to a song

About timbre and texture

To talk about the elements of music

To play in large groups

To create and follow symbols

**Introductory activity (10mins)**

Sing, ‘Hello children’ and play a game of ‘Children can you do this?’

Ask volunteers to suggest sounds to copy and choose four of them. Divide the circle into four and then ask each group to perform one of the sounds.

They should perform separately at first and then layer the sounds up.

*Who can describe the timbre of each sound?*

*Who can describe the texture of the sounds performed together?*

*Which sound was the loudest/quietest?*

*Which sound was the longest/shortest?*

**Main activity (20mins)**

Remind the children of the song ‘Circus Time’ (Tune: Head, shoulders, knees and toes)

*Ladies* ***swinging*** *very high, very high*

*Clowns* ***wobbling*** *on their trikes, riding by*

*Then there’s* ***juggling*** *balls and men on* ***stilts*** *so tall*

***Lots of sounds*** *its circus time, circus time*

*Men* ***standing*** *on one hand, on one hand*

*Drummers* ***playing*** *in a band, in a band*

*Then there’s tightrope* ***walks*** *and ring- master* ***talks***

***Lots of sounds*** *its circus time, circus time.*

Remember the instruments or vocal sounds we used to illustrate the words in bold last week.

(E.g. tambourines, stirring drums, shakers, claves, tambours, triangles and jingles)

Add the sounds to the song in 6 groups, with all the children ‘***talking’*** and playing together on ***‘Lots of sounds’.***

Now add the sounds in each verse cumulatively.

Record each version and listen to it.

*Which version do they like best and why?*

**Assess: Can maintain an independent part in large groups**

**Plenary (10mins)**

If time, ask the children to think of very simple symbols we could draw on the board to symbolize each of the sounds e.g. a swing, bicycle wheel, ball, stilt, a hand, musical note, rope and hat.

Ask each group to follow the symbols and then ask volunteers to suggest an order in which we should play them.

**Learning Outcomes:** Children can

Copy and explore sounds

Work creatively in groups

Maintain an independent part in a large group

Respond to visual and aural cues

Talk about their preferences using simple musical language