

Subject: Music- Unit 2

Year: 5

Unit Title: Blues

Tool Kit: Kapow Primary– Year 5 *Blues* unit

Focus: Introducing pupils to the Blues through performance, composition, improvisation and listening

Overview

This Year 5 unit introduces pupils to the Blues, exploring its key musical features, structure and historical context. Pupils learn to perform, improvise and compose within the blues style, developing confidence and secure foundational skills that can be built on in Year 6.

Key Skills Developed in Year 5:

- Perform simple blues patterns with control and accuracy
- Improvise using the blues scale
- Compose short pieces using a 12-bar blues structure
- Identify and describe features of blues music

NC/PoS: Singing, Listening, Composing and Performing

National Curriculum Links (KS2)

Pupils will:

- Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts with increasing confidence
- Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes
- Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds
- Use and understand staff and other musical notations
- Appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music

Expected Prior Learning

Pupils already know and can do the following from KS1 and lower KS2 music learning:

- Keep a steady pulse and follow simple rhythms
- Sing simple songs in tune and with others
- Use basic musical vocabulary (pulse, rhythm, pitch, tempo, dynamics)
- Play simple parts on tuned and untuned percussion
- Listen to music and talk about how it makes them feel

End Points – What Pupils Must Know and Remember

SINGING

Know that:

- Blues songs often tell stories or express feelings
- Blues singing often uses repetition and call-and-response

Know how to:

- Sing a blues song confidently as part of a group
- Use clear diction and expression when singing

LISTENING

Know that:

- Blues music has identifiable features such as swung rhythm and call-and-response
- The blues originated in African American communities

Know how to:

- Identify key features of blues music when listening
- Talk about what they hear using musical vocabulary

COMPOSING

Know that:

- Blues music often follows a 12-bar structure
- The blues scale can be used to create blues-style melodies

Know how to:

- Compose a simple blues melody using the blues scale
- Create short blues-style lyrics to match a melody

PERFORMING

Know that:

- Blues music can be performed using instruments, voice or both
- A steady pulse is essential for ensemble performance

Know how to:

- Play or sing a simple blues part in time with others
- Perform confidently to an audience

Key Vocabulary

Blues, blues scale, 12-bar blues, chord progression, call and response, swing, rhythm, pitch, tempo, dynamics, improvisation

Session 1 – Introduction to the Blues (Listening & Style)

Learning focus: Understanding the blues style

- Listen to and appraise blues music
- Identify key features (call and response, swung rhythm)

- Keep a steady pulse through clapping or percussion
- **Kapow link:** Year 5 Blues – Lesson 1

Key vocabulary: Blues, pulse, rhythm, swing, call and response

Outcome: Pupils can recognise and describe key features of blues music

Session 2 – 12-Bar Blues & Ensemble Performance

Learning focus: Structure and performance

- Learn and perform the 12-bar blues structure
- Play simple rhythms, chords or bass patterns
- Perform together as a class ensemble
- **Kapow link:** Year 5 Blues – Lessons 2 & 3

Key vocabulary: 12-bar blues, structure, pattern, chord, progression, ensemble

Outcome: Pupils perform together following a 12-bar blues structure

Session 3 – Blues Scale, Improvisation & Composition

Learning focus: Creating and improvising

- Learn the blues scale
- Improvise short melodies over a backing track
- Begin composing a simple blues melody
- Record ideas using graphic or simple staff notation
- **Kapow link:** Year 5 Blues – Lessons 4 & 5

Key vocabulary: Blues scale, improvisation, pitch, melody, compose, notation

Outcome: Pupils improvise and compose short melodies using the blues scale

Session 4 – Lyrics, Performance & Evaluation

Learning focus: Storytelling, performance and appraisal

- Explore how blues lyrics tell stories and express feelings
- Write simple blues-style lyrics
- Rehearse and perform complete blues compositions
- Evaluate performances using musical vocabulary
- **Kapow link:** Year 5 Blues – Lesson 6

Key vocabulary: Lyrics, verse, repetition, storytelling, performance, evaluate, dynamics

Outcome: Confident end-of-unit blues performance with evaluation

Future Learning This Content Supports

This unit prepares pupils for further musical learning by:

- Providing a secure understanding of **stylistic features** that can be transferred to other genres
- Developing **improvisation and composition skills** needed for more complex structures in Year 6
- Building confidence in **ensemble performance** and audience awareness
- Strengthening use of **musical vocabulary** for appraisal and evaluation

Assessment Opportunities

- Teacher observation of performance and participation
- Peer and self-assessment
- Final performance

Resources

- Kapow Primary: Year 5 Blues unit
- Backing tracks
- Tuned and untuned percussion / keyboards
- Listening examples of blues music

Cross-Curricular Links

- **History:** Origins of the Blues
- **English:** Lyric writing and storytelling
- **PSHE:** Expressing feelings through music