

12-Bar Blues

Learning Intentions

Pupils are learning to:

- **identify** 12-bar blues through listening;
- **perform** the 12-bar blues chord sequence;
- **compose** using the 12-bar blues structure; and
- improvise and take risks for learning (Being Creative).

Suggested Success Criteria

Pupils can:

- perform the 12-bar blues chord sequence;
- take risks to improve learning when performing an improvisation;
- develop and perform blues melodies; and
- demonstrate accurate aural perception during listening activities.

Learning Activities

Introduction

Discuss the learning intentions and potential success criteria relating to this activity with your pupils.

Ask them what they already know about chords and how they are used, building on previous activities and units. Give them an opportunity to play the chords of G major, C major and D major on the classroom instruments available, to recap on how the chords sound.

Activity

Play a piece of music based predominantly on a 12-bar blues chord sequence, for example *In the Mood* by Glenn Miller.

Encourage your pupils to listen and comment. For example, you could ask:

- Is the chord pattern exactly the same?
- Is there an introduction or does the chord pattern start straight away?
- Does the key change?
- How many times is the chord sequence repeated?

Introduce the 12-bar blues chord sequence. Explain the structure and give your pupils time to explore the chords using the chord sequence given.

Ask the whole class to perform the 12-bar blues chord sequence several times, to establish a firm understanding.

Give your pupils a 'blues' melody (based on the blues scale) and play it as a whole class. Draw attention to the similarities in the lines of the music.

Invite volunteers to improvise fills at the end of each melodic line, while the rest of the class continues to play the melody.

Give your pupils time to develop their own 12-bar blues melodies based on the blues scales.

Listen to their performances and take feedback from your pupils on the effectiveness of their performances.

Plenary

- What did you learn from this activity?
- Do you have any questions about today's activity?
- Which part of the activity provided you with challenges?
- How did it feel to improvise fills?
- If you were to do this activity again, what would you do differently?

