

Reggae

(Overview)

Listen to and discuss Reggae, including its place in history and differing versions up to the present day, (i.e. Ragga). Clap to taped examples on the second and fourth beats. Sing a reggae song.

Using 'Sweet Jamaican Reggae', learn riffs and tune if possible in a class situation. In groups of between 4 and 6 perform the song. Groups in the 'audience' to fill in score/analysis sheet. Some groups will manage only section A, others will be able to play the whole song including the Da Capo. Record finished versions and write out any sections the children could play using staff notation.

Lesson 1

Learning Intention: To recognise a reggae beat and discuss features of reggae music.

1. Play one or more short examples of reggae and ask the pupils what style of music they are listening to and why? Mention stress on 'off beats' and types of instruments used.
2. Listen to examples again and get class to clap on the 'off beats'. Possibly even encourage some movement around the room to the music.
3. Learn Section A of 'Sweet Jamaican Reggae'
4. Explain how the riff and Chord chart for instruments 1 and 2 should be played.
Split the class into 3 groups: most able to try the riff on a keyboard, selecting an appropriate voice.
Middle ability to play Instruments 1 from chord chart (off beat rhythm B, B, C, A)
Low ability to play Instruments 2 (G,C,D)
Both low and middle ability to use tuned percussion.
5. Give each group a different area to work in (drama hall, practise rooms, classroom) and about 15-20 mins to rehearse.

Plenary: Class performance of section A with three groups playing. This can be done one group at a time with the rest of the class singing, finishing with all groups playing.

Lesson 2

Learning intention: To refine and improve performances of at least 2 different parts of 'Sweet Jamaican Reggae'

1. Sing through section A of the song.
2. Through question and answer, revise key elements of reggae music from last week and how each part should be played.
3. Split into same three groups as last week. Most able to revise riff pattern and then attempt melody line on a keyboard. They may even be able to use a reggae rhythm on the keyboard to play along with. Middle and lower groups to revise Instruments 1 and 2, try the other part (instruments 1 or 2) which they have not played yet and then they can try the riff pattern.
4. Perform Section A as a class with pupils playing the part they feel most comfortable playing.

Plenary: Sing through Section B of the song.

Lesson 3

Learning Intention: To be able to perform one part of Section A and one part of Section B in a class performance.

1. Sing through Sections A, B and A of song as per musical directions on the sheet.
2. Split into same groups as last week. Most able to rehearse riffs from Sections A and B and melody lines for those who are able. Lower and middle groups to rehearse Instruments 1 and 2 from Sections A and B and possibly riff patterns too.

3. Perform the whole song with instrumental accompaniment.

Plenary: Either get individuals to show examples of good work or discuss groups for next week (see lesson 4)

Lesson 4/5

Learning intention: To begin work on a group performance of 'Sweet Jamaican Reggae'

1. Split (or let children choose) groups of 3-6 performers. Each group will need a player for the riff, Instruments 1, Instruments 2 and either singers or a person to play the melody.
2. Children will need to choose appropriate instruments and may wish to include percussion and guitar parts which have not yet been rehearsed. The aim is to at least perform Section A twice through. If the group can perform the complete song then they should.
3. Rehearse in groups (use different areas if possible)

Plenary: Discuss good elements of performance (i.e. how the group is set up in front of the audience; are they going to use movement? Are they bringing in clothes to change into?; what happens if they make a mistake during a performance- how should they deal with it so the audience doesn't know?)

Lesson 5/6

Learning Intention: To perform 'Sweet Jamaican Reggae' to the rest of the class.

1. Remind groups of expectations for their performances.
2. Split into groups to rehearse.
3. Perform to class – performances to be videoed if possible or at least recorded on cassette.

Plenary: Discuss good elements of performance

Lesson 6/7

Learning Intention: To give an analysis of another group's work, paying particular attention to good elements of performance.

1. Discuss what makes a performance good.
2. Give out song analysis sheets and explain what is required.
3. Watch video/ listen to recording of last week's performances.
4. Allocate each group another group to analyse. Watch video again.
5. Groups can discuss answers or this can be an individual task. Comments to be written on sheets. At least 2 good points and 2 improvements to be written in full sentences about the group they are analysing. Aim to use as much musical language as possible (dynamics, tempo, texture, timbre etc.)
6. Children may be able to write out the parts they could play within the group on manuscript paper for their folders.

Plenary: Give out rewards, merits etc for good group performances and explain why.

Follow up: Mark sheets and photocopy as appropriate, so that each child can have a copy of what they have written and the group they have written about can have comments on their performance.