



Pitch, Tempo, and Rhythm

Music is essentially thoughts and feelings expressed through sound and rhythm. Joy, celebration, happiness, anger, sorrow, fear, love—the list of emotions that can be expressed by music could go on and on.

Music has been around as long as history has been recorded. It is in our nature to sing or find a way to make musical sound with objects we call musical instruments. There are many types of instruments to explore, and they can be combined to make the most interesting music. Traditional instruments can form a band or orchestra, or you can repurpose milk jugs, trash can lids, and plastic bins to create your own junk drum ensemble. And don't forget the human voice—the most versatile instrument of all.

As you embark on a journey of musical exploration, you will discover how music reflects culture. Every part of the world can be identified by its “sound.” Whether you create music, build instruments, or simply sit back and enjoy the artistry of others, you will have had a magical experience. May this journey inspire you and those who share in your musical endeavor.

Objectives

This month's activities should:

- Help Scouts learn about the five groups of musical instruments.
- Give Scouts knowledge of musical symbols and terminology.
- Prepare Scouts to go to a live performance or participate in a performance.
- Give Scouts the opportunity to compose music.
- Teach Scouts how to catalog a personal or family music collection.
- Help Scouts learn about the development of music and influential musicians in the United States.

RELATED ADVANCEMENT AND AWARDS

- Bugling, Music, and Theater merit badges



Leadership Planning

As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items during your planning meetings when choosing music as your program feature.

1. Do Scouts in our unit have musical interests and abilities?
2. Would our unit benefit from the opportunity to share musical talents with the community?
3. Are there any music teachers or other individuals in the music profession who could help?
4. Do we have local venues that host live performances such as symphony orchestras, opera, choral music, or pop music?
5. Do our schools have music programs where members of the unit can participate in a musical group such as band, choir, or orchestra?
6. Does a member of our unit have the ability to compose music?
7. If we were to build traditional musical instruments, is there someone in the area who is good with tools and could assist?
8. How can we involve our parents?
9. To meet our needs, what should we change in the sample meeting plans?

PARENTS CAN HELP WITH THE MUSIC PROGRAM FEATURE BY:

1. Sharing their musical skills and abilities and supporting your activities
2. Helping your group find someone who can assist with building musical instruments
3. Providing transportation for the main event
4. Introducing you to a local music teacher or music professional
5. Assisting in sorting and organizing the family music collection

6. Maintaining current Youth Protection certification, which is required of all adults providing transportation for or participating in outings.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Musical instruments are frequently classified by the way they generate sound.

Woodwinds generate sound when a column of air is made to vibrate as it passes over a reed or opening. Woodwinds include clarinets, saxophones, oboes, and flutes.

Brass instruments generate sound by air passing through the player's lips, which "buzz" in the instrument's mouthpiece. Slides or valves are used to change the length of the tubing, thus changing the pitch. There are two different kinds of brass: The tuba, baritone, and trombone are examples of low brass; the trumpet and French horn are examples of high brass.

Percussion instruments generate sound, with or without a definite pitch, when hit with an implement, shaken, rubbed, scraped, or struck by any other action that sets the object into vibration. Examples include chimes, glockenspiel, handbells, marimba, bass drum, cymbals, and xylophone.

String instruments generate sound when a string is plucked, strummed, slapped, or otherwise manipulated. The guitar, violin, mandolin, ukulele, harp, autoharp, harpsichord, and piano are examples of string instruments.





Electronic instruments generate sound by creating an electrical audio signal that ultimately drives a loudspeaker. The digital piano, electronic keyboard, organ, analog synthesizer, digital synthesizer, MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) instruments, wind synthesizer, digital drums, and virtual musical instruments are examples of electronic instruments.

Music Composition

Composing music is much like writing poetry, a short story, or a novel. The first step in composing music is to determine the sounds you want. Will it be sung by an individual, small group, or choir? How about an instrumental piece? Will you compose for one instrument, a small group of the same instrument, or a full band or orchestra?

Once you have chosen the type of instrumentation or voice for which you are composing, you need to know the ranges of the voice and instruments so that you do not write above or below the capability of the individual singing or the instruments being played. Invite a music teacher in your community to share these ranges with you, or do your own research.



A basic knowledge of music notation and terminology is necessary as well. Musical signs and terms give the performer instructions on how to perform the music in a certain way. Those who have taken private music lessons or a school ensemble class will be able to draw on this knowledge. Invite music teachers to help with composition.

Make a Traditional Musical Instrument

High-quality musical instruments can cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Some, like the famous violins made around 1700 by Antonio Stradivari, have sold for millions of dollars.



You don't have to spend a lot of money, however. You can make musical instruments out of materials you find around your house or that you purchase for just a few dollars. Find the plans to build a simple musical instrument online, then ask a craftsman to help you build it. When you are done, learn how to play it, and perform at a unit talent show or recital. If everyone in the unit makes the same instrument or instruments that can be played together, you could have an ensemble perform.



Attend a Live Concert

The possibilities to hear live music are innumerable. You could attend a school music program; a local middle or high school's band, choir, or orchestra concert; or a concert by a college or university ensemble. You may even have access to a professional orchestra or vocal ensemble. Find out about performances in your area and plan to attend one. Try to learn about the music to be performed before you go. While listening, make notes about your feelings on how the music affects you.

Hold a Unit Cultural Night

Your unit can hold a cultural night where members display handmade musical instruments, share copies and recordings of musical compositions, or exhibit presentations on music history. Have a recital in conjunction with the displays during which members of the unit play their instruments, perform their compositions, or play music they have been working on in lessons or at school.





MUSIC GAMES

Symphony Orchestra (played like Fruit Basket)

Equipment: Chairs

How to play: Have the group sit in chairs in a circle in a large room or open outdoor area. There should be enough chairs for all the players but one; that player is the “conductor.” Assign each of the other players a type of instrument by going around the circle and saying, “Wind, percussion, brass, electronic, keyboard,” etc., until everyone has a label. The conductor stands in the middle of the circle and calls out a type of instrument. When they do so, all the players assigned to that group must get up and scramble to find another seat. The conductor, meanwhile, also tries to get a seat. Whichever player is left standing becomes the new conductor, and the old conductor assumes the player’s instrument type.

Variation: To enhance learning, assign each player an actual instrument instead of an instrument group (e.g., bass drum instead of percussion). Call out instrument groups as before; players must then figure out which group they belong in.

Note: Be creative in deciding who becomes the conductor first. For example, it could be the person with the closest birthday or the most siblings.

Rhythm Gossip

Equipment: A large chalkboard or dry erase board, chalk or dry erase pens, erasers

How to play: Teach the group some basic rhythm patterns such as four quarter notes; two eighth notes, quarter, quarter, quarter; or quarter, two eighths, two eighths, quarter. Add rests to make it more challenging. Form two teams, and have them stand in a single-file line facing the chalkboard or dry erase board. The player at the front of the line has chalk or pen at the ready. The player at the back of the line taps a rhythm on the shoulder of the next player, who passes the rhythm to the person in front of them, and so forth until it reaches the person at the front. That person puts the rhythm on the board. After each round, the player at the front moves to the back, and the next player becomes the scribe. Continue until everyone has had a chance to be the scribe.

Scoring: Each correct answer scores a point for the team. Play to as many points as you wish.

Name That Tune, Instrument, or Genre

Equipment: CD or MP3 player with an assortment of music, 30-second timer, bell or buzzer for each team

How to play: Play a musical selection. Teams try to buzz in and name the song.

Variations: If you have recordings of instrumental solos, teams can try to name the instruments or instrument groups. If you have recordings of various genres of music, teams can try to name the genres they hear. (Keep these broad: classical, jazz, pop/rock, gospel, etc.)

Scoring: Each correct guess earns a point; first team to score 10 points wins.

Minute to Win It

Equipment:

- Station 1: a collection of 10 to 20 CDs of various artists and genres
- Station 2: paper and pencil
- Station 3: flash cards that show the names of instruments by family (percussion, woodwind, brass, string, electronic) and each member of each family (e.g., soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, baritone saxophone)
- Station 4: CD or MP3 player with a collection of pop songs
- Station 5: music rhythm flash cards that build the rhythm tree (one whole note, two half notes, four quarter notes, eight eighth notes, 16 sixteenth notes) along with a similar set for rests

How to play: Set up stations as described above. Players visit the stations to do the following:

- Station 1: Organize the CDs in alphabetical order by artist and then by title in less than a minute.
- Station 2: On a piece of paper write the order of dynamics from soft to loud, Italian terms for tempo from slow to fast, and all five musical families in less than a minute. Dynamics are pianissimo (pp), piano (p), mezzo piano (mp), mezzo forte (mf), forte (f), and fortissimo (ff). Italian terms include grave (extremely slow), largo (very slow), andante (at a walking pace), moderato (moderately), allegro (quick and bright), and presto (extremely fast). Musical families are percussion, woodwind, brass, string, and electronic.
- Station 3: In 1 minute, sort the cards by family (woodwind, brass, string, etc.) and then put each family in order from highest pitch to lowest.
- Station 4: Identify as many one- or two-second song snippets as possible in 1 minute.
- Station 5: Set up the cards with the whole note on top, two half notes below the whole note, four quarter notes below the half notes, etc. Do the same with rests.

Scoring: Time the players at each station. Give 3 points to the fastest player, 2 points to the second fastest, and 1 point to the third fastest. Player with the most points overall wins.



E.D.G.E. Ideas

Explain how it is done—Tell them.

Demonstrate the steps—Show them.

Guide learners as they practice—Watch them do it.

Enable them to succeed on their own—Have them practice/teach it.

EXPLAIN

- Explain the characteristics of musical instruments in each family.
- Describe the structure of music composition.
- Explain how a basic melody is constructed.
- Discuss basic techniques and safety of equipment and tools for building musical instruments.
- Explain the basic protocol and etiquette at a live concert; tell the unit about the music that will be performed.

DEMONSTRATE

- Show pictures or display instruments from each musical instrument family.
- Play musical samples of each family to demonstrate how they sound.
- Demonstrate how to draw music notation and rhythms.
- Demonstrate basic melodic structure using a major scale.
- Show how to take measurements and construct parts of a musical instrument.
- Play samples of the music that will be performed at a live concert.

GUIDE

- Have the Scouts teach each other in breakout groups, explaining the characteristics of musical instruments in each musical instrument family.
- Have Scouts practice drawing music notation and rhythms.
- Help individuals create a melody.
- While at a concert, help the members of the unit practice proper etiquette.
- Help the members of the unit brainstorm ideas about how a cultural night might look in their unit.

ENABLE

- Have each individual identify musical instruments from pictures or sound samples.
- Let individuals write melodies that complement each other in a song or composition.
- Let Scouts assemble the parts and make final adjustments to their homemade instruments.
- At a live concert, have Scouts take notes on what they hear, feel, and see as the music is being performed.
- Let Scouts plan and implement their ideas and create the agenda for a cultural night.

MAIN EVENT SUMMARIES

● ESSENTIAL	■ CHALLENGING	◆ ADVANCED
Evening Activity A concert outing—Attend a live performance of a local or touring band, orchestra, or choir. Prior to the event, find out what music will be played and familiarize yourself with the performers, composers, and genres. Learn about protocols and etiquette for the type of concert you will be attending. Write a review of what you felt during the performance.	Evening Activity Cultural night—Host a musical cultural night to show what you have learned about music. Some Scouts might make displays about music history, composers, and musical instrument families. Others might showcase their music collections or the instruments they have made. Have background music playing, and devote a portion of the evening to performances by members of the unit.	Evening Activity Unit recital—Hold a recital to showcase the musical talents of your unit. Set up a program that includes solo and ensemble performances of music in a variety of genres. Encourage members of the unit to compose pieces of music to include in the recital. Invite family members, neighboring Scout units, and members of the chartered organization and of the community.



MUSIC

Meeting Plan: Genres and Composers



Week 1 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	As Scouts arrive, challenge them to sort flash cards of musical instruments into groups. Have music playing in the background to set the tone for the night. If possible, use several interpretations of a familiar song in different genres.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the group to the different possible main events. Have them discuss what main event they may want to pursue. 		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 35 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss different genres in music. Research different musical groups in your area that perform in these genres. 		7:25 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the information above. Discuss which members of the unit have musical ability and could participate in a unit recital. Find out which genres they like to perform. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the information above. Talk about music composers over the centuries. Study scores and listen to recordings of the music. Try to identify characteristics of the period in which they wrote. 		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin making plans for the main event. Work on advancement and Scout skills as needed. 		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Symphony Orchestra (described earlier)		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.






MUSIC

Meeting Plan: Instruments and Ensembles



Week 2 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Prepare flash cards of musical notation such as quarter notes and rests, half notes and rests, etc., and cards with the names of each of these symbols. Have the Scouts organize them side by side, matching notation with the description. Have music playing in the background that resembles the music they'll be performing or listening to or that relates to the instruments they will be building or that comes from an individual family's music collection.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 15 minutes	Practice identifying instruments in the five different musical groups. Use flash cards, and have the members shout out the names. For an added challenge, include less familiar instruments like the basset horn or zither.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 25 minutes   	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the internet or other sources, determine the instrument makeup of various ensembles (symphony orchestra, string quintet, jazz band, rock band, etc.). 		7:25 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the information above. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study printed music for various instruments, and discuss any instrument-specific characteristics. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the information above. Discuss how leadership plays a role in musical ensembles. Who sets the tempo? Is there a director, as in an orchestra, or does one of the players direct? Who leads each section of larger ensembles? 		
Breakout Groups 25 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue making plans for the main event. Work on advancement and Scout skills as needed. 		7:50 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Rhythm Gossip (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



MUSIC

Meeting Plan: Collecting Music



Week 3 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Play Musical Chairs using excerpts of the music that will be featured at the concert your unit will attend or the genres you discussed last week.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn three songs that you could teach to a Cub Scout pack or other group. Have a Music merit badge counselor available to work with Scouts and sign off requirements they have completed. 		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 40 minutes	Catalog a collection of CDs belonging to one of your Scouts, or review how a collection of MP3s is organized in a program like iTunes.		7:20 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the information above. Using the internet or other sources, find a favorite artist's discography. Discuss ways to complete your collection of the artist's works. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the information above. Discuss the ethics of file-sharing and illegal downloads. 		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue making plans for the main event. Work on advancement and Scout skills as needed. 		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play Name That Tune, Instrument, or Genre (described earlier). 		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



MUSIC

Meeting Plan: Mood and Meaning



Week 4 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Have a Music merit badge counselor available to work with Scouts and sign off requirements they have completed.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 15 minutes	Have a Music merit badge counselor available to work with Scouts and sign off requirements they have completed.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 30 minutes	Brainstorm a list of moods. Using someone's CD or MP3 collection, find songs or other compositions that convey those moods and discuss how music translates those moods.		7:25 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the information above. • Read the lyrics of several popular songs. Discuss how the lyrics support the mood of the song and whether the music and lyrics communicate the same mood. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the information above. • Identify several songs or compositions that have become identified with a particular country, political movement, or cause. Using the internet or other sources, learn more about those connections. 		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	Review the group's participation in the main event.		7:55 p.m.
Game 15 minutes	Play Minute to Win It (described earlier).		8:10 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



MUSIC

Main Event: A Concert Outing



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 4 to 6 hours

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Essential (Tier I)

Attend a live performance of a local or touring band, orchestra, or choir. Prior to the event, find out what music will be played and familiarize yourself with the performers, composers, and genres. Learn about protocols and etiquette for the type of concert you will be attending. Write a review of what you felt during the performance.

Equipment List

- Notepads and pencils
- Program notes about the music
- CDs or MP3s of the music featured at the concert so you can study it prior to the concert

Activity

- Familiarize yourself with the music that will be featured at the concert. Pick a typical Scout night prior to the concert to listen to excerpts of the music you will hear.
- Choose a concert venue, date, and time. Buy tickets, if necessary.
- If possible, make arrangements to visit the venue ahead of time. Learn about the different types of workers at the venue, such as ushers, ticket takers, stage crew, sound or lighting technicians, backstage crew, etc.
- Attend the concert, paying attention to etiquette practices. Also, take notes as you listen. Afterward, discuss how you feel about the music.

Safety

- Use the buddy system; cellphones are a good idea as appropriate. Have cellphone numbers of leaders in case you are separated. Know the meeting place outside the venue.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes

It would be enjoyable to choose a genre familiar to everyone, but when choosing the concert, be adventurous and pick a less familiar one. Camping could easily be included if you are traveling to a performance out of town.



MUSIC

Main Event: Cultural Night



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 4 to 6 hours

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Challenging (Tier II)

Host a musical cultural night to show off what you have learned about music. Some Scouts might make displays about music history, composers, and musical instrument families. Others might showcase their music collections or the instruments they have made. Have background music playing, and devote a portion of the evening to performances by unit members.

Equipment List

- Presentation boards
- Three-ring binders with organizers
- Materials for making instruments
- MP3 player and speakers
- Tables, chairs
- Microphone and sound system
- Parking lot ushers' vests with reflective stripes

Activity

- Choose a date, location, and time to hold the event.
- Decide which youth and adults will help.
- Have members of the unit decide what kind of event they want to hold; this could include musical performance, a presentation of homemade instruments, an organization of family CD collections, displays of musical instruments, etc.
- Organize rehearsals, building materials, and places to build instruments.
- Start planning and building homemade instruments.
- Learn about instrument families.
- Choose, organize, and start rehearsing music that will be performed.

Safety

- Follow safety procedures while building musical instruments.
- Consider parking lot safety for the date of the event. Organize parking attendants, if needed.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes



MUSIC

Main Event: Unit Recital



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 4 to 6 hours

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____



Advanced (Tier III)

Hold a recital to showcase the musical talents of your unit. Set up a program that includes solo and ensemble performances of music in a variety of genres. Encourage members of the unit to compose pieces of music to include in the recital. Invite family members, neighboring Scout units, and members of the chartered organization and of the community.

Equipment List

- Microphone, stand, and public address system for master of ceremonies
- Chairs and music stands for performers
- Chairs for audience
- Extension cords, amplifiers, and patch cords
- Musical instruments
- Printed programs with a list of the performers and notes on the music being performed

Activity

- Choose a date, location, and time for the event.
- Choose youth and adults who will assist in preparing for the event.
- As a unit, discuss and choose the performers.
- Decide who is interested in composing, and start learning basic composition structure and practices.
- Organize solos, small ensembles, and/or full groups.
- Individuals and members of groups decide what they will perform, and start rehearsing the music.
- Set rehearsal dates. There may need to be extra rehearsals outside the regularly scheduled meeting night.
- Choose the date of the dress rehearsal.
- The master of ceremonies needs to organize an agenda, and members of the unit need to turn in to the emcee as soon as possible information about what they will be performing, composers' names, and notes about the music.

Safety

- Contact the fire marshal for steps to take in preparing a performance area. If an event is large enough, some areas require certain safety steps to set up the room to meet fire safety rules and codes.
- Parking lot ushers may be needed if you expect a large audience. Safety vests should be worn by parking lot ushers.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes

Consider making the event a money-earning project; if the unit chooses to do that, be sure to complete a Unit Money-Earning Application, No. 34427.



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Books

Music and Bugling merit badge pamphlet

Burkholder, J. Peter, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*, 9th ed. W.W. Norton and Co., 2014.

Hindemith, Paul. *The Craft of Musical Composition*. Schott Publishing Co., 1984.

Websites

Country Music Association

Website: www.cmaworld.com

DIY.org's Instrument Maker Page

Website: <https://diy.org/skills/instrumentmaker>

Drum Corps International

Website: www.dci.org

International Bluegrass Music Association

Website: <https://ibma.org/>

Red Hot Jazz Archive

Website: www.redhotjazz.com

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum

Website: www.rockhall.com

Smithsonian: Music and Musical Instruments

Website: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/subjects/music-musical-instruments>

U.S. Naval Academy Drum and Bugle Corps

Website: www.usna.edu/usnadb

WannaLearn.com's Building Musical Instruments Page

Website: www.wannalearn.com/Crafts_and_Hobbies/Woodworking/Building_Musical_Instruments

Related Program Features

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