

Dynamic Play

Musical games can be used as energisers throughout the day or at the start of a music class. These two activities integrate the element of dynamics with other musical learning.

Warm Ups
and
Games

Find more resources at [artslive.com](https://www.artslive.com)

Paper Decrescendo

Everyone starts with an A4 piece of paper (preferably re-used).

The leader (teacher or confident student) counts in bars of 4/4 (1, 2, 3, 4) at a steady tempo.

On the '1' of every bar, everyone tears their piece of paper in half and as the 2, 3 and 4 are being counted, everyone places one half down in front of them to prepare to tear the other half in half again on the next '1'. This repeats as the halves become smaller and smaller. This means everyone is creating a paper ripping sound together, with each rip naturally getting quieter as the paper gets smaller. Therefore this activity turns the whole class into a musical ensemble performing a 'ripping composition' that decrescendos.

Extension

Ask everyone to line up the paper halves that they just ripped up from smallest to largest. Begin the whole group 4/4 count again and have each person pick up their smallest piece and tear it in half on the '1' (and then discard this piece), then pick the next size up, and then rip (again) on the '1', and have everyone continue through each piece of paper. The increased paper size should create a whole group crescendo. This extension is much trickier to do in a large group, but is achievable with patience and focus.



Term	Symbol	Effect
Pianissimo	<i>pp</i>	very soft
piano	<i>p</i>	soft
Mezza piano	<i>mp</i>	moderately soft
Mezzo forte	<i>mf</i>	slightly loud
forte	<i>f</i>	loud
fortissimo	<i>ff</i>	very loud

Dynamics Circle

This is similar to a musical chairs activity that incorporates the different dynamic names and symbols (without the eliminations). Prepare by drawing or printing enough dynamics symbols so that there is one per student, then place these symbols on the floor in a circle (the symbols on the opposite page can be copied and cut out for use).

Ask the class to stand outside the circle, play music (either on instrument or over a sound system; play a song of your choice) and invite students to walk around the circle in time. When the music stops, invite students to stop in front of a symbol and invite students, one at a time, to play 8 crotchet beats (clapping or using body percussion) using the dynamic displayed on the symbol they have stopped near. Continue this activity several times to help students reinforce and explore their understandings. This activity can be simplified for younger students by limiting the number of symbols or by keeping the game moving more quickly (only a few students share each at each stop).

Extension

If you have hand-held instruments, use these in later rounds to extend the students' understanding of dynamics using instrumentation.

Dynamic Symbols

The symbols below can be copied and cut up to use in the Dynamics Circle game (on the opposite page). Make enough so there is one for each student.



Find more resources at [artslive.com](https://www.artslive.com)

pp

p

mp

f

f

ff

Hidden Dynamics

Musical games can be used as energisers throughout the day or at the start of a music class. This activity integrates the element of dynamics with other musical learning.



Find more resources at [artslive.com](https://www.artslive.com)

Year F-6

- Choose a classroom object to hide and a student volunteer who will try to find it (the 'guesser').
- Explain that the rest of the class will be working together as a musical ensemble (trying to make sound in unison) to create musical clues to help the student find the hidden object.
- To keep the game simple and safe, students can sit in a large circle with the guesser in the middle. A quiet sound would indicate that the student is far from the object and a very loud sound would indicate that they are very close.
- Decide on a sound like a vowel sound or vocables (e.g. doo woop, la la, shoop be doop) that the group will make. The ensemble will need to make their clues clear, so it's important that students listen to each other to create a common volume. The teacher or a student volunteer can always lead the volume of the cues.
- Ask the guessing student to close their eyes or blindfold them while the object is being hidden.
- As a group, silently decide where to hide the object. The easiest way is to choose one student to hide the object without speaking.
- Let the guessing begin. If the challenge is too great, reduce the number of students in the ensemble.

Year 3-4

Explore the approaches described in the F-2 section (above) and then try this extension:

- Get out some instruments and change the ensemble from voice-based to instrument-based. Hand out a few percussion instruments to use in the game and have students explore the dynamic possibilities of their instrument before the game starts. Are there ways to muffle sounds? Can instruments like a triangle ever be quiet? There are some instruments that might only be played when the guesser gets very close. If there are no instruments available, you can use body percussion variations – rubbing palms, tapping fingers, clapping hands, clicking, or stomping.

Year 5-6

Explore the approaches described in the F-2 and 3-4 sections and then try this extension:

- Have students play the game in smaller groups using any of the variations above.

Voice Warm-ups

Warm-ups are a playful way to exercise singing muscles and gain more confidence making sounds. Demonstrate each of these warm-up activities and then have the group try together. Be brave and playful!



Find more resources at [artslive.com](https://www.artslive.com)



Facial Warm-ups

Breathe in slowly through the nose then sigh, louder and louder on each out-breath. Roll the shoulders to help relax the upper body.

Chew one, then two, then three imaginary pieces of chewing gum. Swallow the chewing gum! Different notes are made by making different shapes in our mouths, therefore it's good to wake up the whole mouth.

With softly-closed fists, gently pummel your chest, preferably with an accompanying 'Tarzan' noise. You can also pummel your shoulders, tummy, thighs and anything else you can reach.

Vocal Warm-ups

Lead the following vocal warm-ups and encourage students to notice what is happening in their bodies during each one.

- Put your hand on your diaphragm. Take a big breath in and slowly hiss it out by making a 'ssss' sound for as long as you can.
- Make a siren sound by going up and down in pitch. Follow the pitch of the sound with your finger. Students will be able to go higher in pitch.
- Sing numbers in the octave, jumping up and down according to the numbers: 1, 1 2 1, 1 2 3 2 1, 1 2 3 4 3 2 1. If you don't know which note to start on or how big to make the jump in sound (interval), just have a go - this activity is more about noticing and trying to make changes in pitch. You can increase the difficulty of the activity by substituting a number for an action (such as a stamp or a clap).
- Ask a student to lead a sequence of notes for the group to copy. Students can also work in small groups leading each other to try different note sequences. Kids learn best from their peers in singing.

Rhythmic Play

Musical games can be used as energisers throughout the day to re-energise students or at the start of a music class. These two activities integrate the element of rhythm.

Warm Ups
and
Games

Find more resources at [artslive.com](https://www.artslive.com)

Bananas in the Sky

Teach the song (below), in full, to the group, then create your own actions, or work with your students to create actions together. The song uses the same tune as the 'Heads, Shoulders Knees and Toes' song and the words are:

There are no bananas in the sky, in the sky

There are no bananas in the sky, in the sky

There's a sun, and a moon and a coconut cream pie

There are no bananas in the sky, in the sky.

Once students are confident with the whole song, start removing words (and include a rest in their place), but still mark the timing of these position in the song using the action.

This is an elimination game – if any student says the word/s that have been removed, they are out and sit down.



Pass the Beat A-Round the Room

This is a great warm-up for tempo and rhythm.

Students stand in a circle, and in a steady tempo, say the phrase 'Pass The Beat A-Round The Room [rest]'

The word 'around' is split over two beats (A-Round), and the [rest] should be marked silently on shoulders or knees to maintain the tempo.

As the students become more confident, you can speed up the tempo.

This is an elimination game – if a student misses their beat, or says the wrong word, they are out and sit down.