

Transition Songs

Target Age: 5-8 yrs



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Overview

Songs have been used to educate, calm and organise young students for longer than the written word! This resource presents a series of fourteen short useful songs that can be integrated regularly to create a calm, unified and orderly classroom. Many of the songs are based on the melodies of existing children's song to make them easy to learn and teach.

Each song is presented with lyrics, a backing track and an activity guide with ideas about how to introduce and explore each song. There are ukulele chords included as an optional extension for interested educators.

Why?

Transition songs can soothe and motivate children to focus and participate fully. Melody and rhyme support language learning; and routines facilitate student autonomy and security. Including music throughout the day can foster students love of music and lay the foundations for their greater musical development. Furthermore, integrating songs regularly can support educators' sense of wellbeing, which creates a calmer learning environment for everyone.

Parts of the resource

- ✓ 14 songs
- ✓ audio backing tracks
- ✓ 14 activity guides

Australian Curriculum

Students develop aural skills by exploring and imitating sounds, pitch and rhythm patterns using voice, movement and body percussion (ACAMUM080).

Sing and play instruments to improvise, practise a repertoire of chants, songs and rhymes, including songs used by cultural groups in the community (ACAMUM081).

Listen to, recite and perform poems, chants, rhymes and songs, imitating and inventing sound patterns including alliteration and rhyme (ACELT1585).

Teaching Songs to 5-8 Year Olds

Songs are a great tool to support students' emotional, social, physical and cognitive development. Young students learn best when songs are taught in smaller, achievable chunks.



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Explore

Song repetition is key but the same song can be sung a hundred different ways. Check out the variations ideas below.

- Start by singing the whole song to the group.
- Teach students a line at a time using an echo pattern.
- Use a call and response pattern. For example, the teacher calls 'rain, rain, go away' and the students respond 'come again another day'.
- Go around a circle and have each student sing two words or a line from the song. For example, student A sings 'rain rain', student B sings 'go away.' This can be directed by pointing at students or by pointing at lyrics written on the board. This will reveal who knows the song and who is still learning it.
- Encourage students to practice singing the song in their head. This can be developed by having a group alternate between singing out loud and singing in their heads. This challenge will take lots of concentration but will help students to internalise timing, pitch and words.
- Have students explore one musical component like humming the melody or clapping the rhythm.
- Integrate actions, and include the students ideas.
- Vary how the song is sung i.e whisper words or do a spooky version.
- Break the song into smaller phrases and slow down the tempo, it may take several sessions to teach one song.
- Young students will match your enthusiasm, so bring it!
- Individual students may need additional support to engage with a song. Giving students props or shakers to use, or having them in close proximity can help support their focus.

Embed

- Songs can be incorporated across the curriculum. Songs have been used to teach language and culture longer than the written word. Songs can welcome students into the classroom, support their pack-up process, remind them to wash their hands or prepare them for a new learning area. Specific learning concepts can also be consolidated through song. For example, a call and response maths song can be used to practice computation or to teach students the months of the year.
- Sing early, sing often. A repeating melody can be comforting to young students. Consider repeating songs at the same time or during the same activity each day.
- Find out what songs families sing and incorporate recorded or live versions of these.
- Make up a new nonsense songs each day.

Teaching Songs to 5-8 Year Olds

Sharing your voice with children is a gift; a joyful and playful approach is more important than a perfect musical presentation.



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Background information

When singing a seemingly 'simple' action song in a group context, young students are simultaneously processing a huge amount of information and developing and extending their current skills. In order to participate in an action song, students need to remember and recall a rhythm, melody, a sequence of words, and a sequence of actions. They need to be able to enact this at the same time as others, while making meaning of the content. Physically, they will also use gross and/or fine motor skills to execute the actions, while they are learning to control the pitch and focus of their voices. This is all very complicated, especially when they may be exploring and learning some of these skills for the first time! Be patient and celebrate success.

It is important to be aware of the pitch range you are using. Young student's vocal chords are shorter than adults, as a result they naturally speak and sing with a higher pitch range than adults. In a combined group of children and adults you will need to find a happy medium for pitch as many adults will be comfortable singing at a lower pitch than their young students. The best way of knowing if you have found a good key is by listening to the response you get. If the group is having difficulty singing at the pitch, assess whether it is too high or low and try again. You could even turn it into a game of singing ridiculously high or low, or in funny voices, etc.

Another way of finding appropriate keys is to ask a confident student if they can start the group off on a song – they will naturally sing in a comfortable range for themselves and other students.

Hello Song

A greeting song can be used at the beginning of the day or a session to welcome, calm and unify students; preparing them to engage and learn. Incorporating the song regularly can create a reassuring start to the day or session.

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Lyrics and chords

C

Hello everyone,

G7

hello everyone,

C

G7

hello, how are you?

F

C

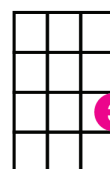
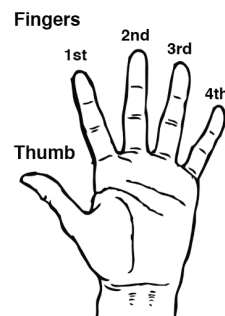
Put your arms up and then back down.

G7

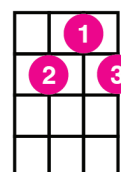
C

Breathe in it's time to begin.

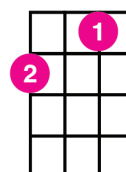
Ukulele chords



C



G7



F

Music tip

This song uses the same melody as the 'Hey Diddle Diddle' song.

Can you use the chords you've learnt here to play *Hey Diddle Diddle* too.

Introduce the concept

How did you get to school? How do you feel? How many different ways can we greet each other? What makes us feel welcome? What happens when we breathe in?

Introduce the song

Sing one line at a time and have students sing it back. Repeat this with the whole verse. Sing the song at least three times in a row to help students gain confidence with the words. Consider sitting in a circle and encourage eye contact and smiles. Students will match your enthusiasm, so bring it!

Actions can be incorporated into the song by having students respond to the 'How are you?' line with a thumbs up, thumbs down or a wavering hand.

Adapt

Use the song to introduce specific activities by changing a few words in the last line i.e 'it's time for reading to begin'

Explore the different ways the song can be sung. Use a squeaky voice, a robot voice, or a very deep voice. Ask students for their ideas.

Greeting Game Song

This is an active song that requires students to greet each other one at a time as they move around a circle - a bit like a simple bushdance. It can help students develop social skills, foster positive relationships and create a sense of belonging. It is most useful at the start of the day or a session.

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Lyrics and chords

Verse one - students wave at each other

C

Hello friend and how are you?

G

How are you?

C

How are you?

C

Hello friend and how are you?

G

C

How are you today?

Verse two - students shake hands

Take my hand and shake, shake shake,
shake, shake, shake, shake, shake, shake.

Take my hand and shake, shake, shake,
say hello today.

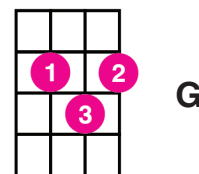
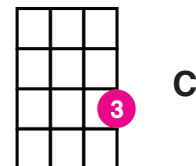
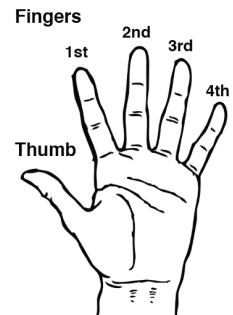
Verse three - students wave to each other and step towards a new partner

Take a step and wave goodbye,
wave goodbye, wave goodbye.

Take a step and wave goodbye,
Now meet your new friend.

All verses follow the same chord progression

Ukulele chords



Music tip

This song uses the same melody and the easiest chords for the 'London Bridge' song.

The audio recording is in a different key.

Introduce the concept

Why do people greet each other?

What are the different ways they do this?

Have you ever shaken someone's hand?

Are there different ways to shake hands?

Greeting Game Song

Teach the song before introducing the actions. Walk students through the movements one line at a time. It may be easier to speak the song rather than sing it while they are learning.



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Introduce the song

Sing each verse through and have students repeat the verse back. Once students are confident with the words add in actions that students can do on the spot (such as waving or pretending to shake someone's hand). Once they have learned the song, encourage students to practice singing the song in their head. This can be developed by having the group alternate between singing out loud and singing in their heads. This challenge will take lots of concentration but will help students to internalise timing, pitch and words.

Introduce the movement

Have the class form a donut shape with an inner and outer circle. Each student should be facing another student (teachers will need to join in if there is an odd number). This can be done by getting students to find a partner and then stand facing them as part of two lines. The teacher can then guide the ends of the line together into a circle.

Verse one

Students look at their partner and wave as they sing the first verse.

Verse two

Students sing to their partner and shake hands.

Verse three

Students sing to their partner and wave goodbye. Students take a step towards their new partner. The inner circle will move clockwise and the outer circle will move anti-clockwise.

Encourage eye contact and smiling in each exchange.

Adapt

What other actions could be added into this song? Brainstorm with students and incorporate their ideas.

There is the option to include a set question for each pair to discuss when they first meet their partner. What is your name (if it's a new group)? What did you have for breakfast? What is your favourite show? Research 'circle time' activities for more discussion ideas.

Name Game Song

This is a circle song game that helps students get to know each other. It can be used to teach names or just to create a short brain break. This song gives students an opportunity to explore alliteration, rhythm, chanting and solos.



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Lyrics and chords

Students: Hello friend and what's your name?

Student: My name's Cath and I like cookies.

Students: This is Cath and she likes cookies.

For more verse examples listen to the accompanying audio track.

Music tip

Add in body percussion to help children keep in time.

Click fingers, pat knees or clap along with the beat.

Introduce the concept

Before teaching the song, give students some time to think of something they like, that starts with the first letter of their name (such as Sarah/sunshine, Mo/marbles, Fatima/fruit). The song will be repeated around the circle, until everyone has had a turn. Consider having students create a drawing of themselves and brainstorm a list of words that they could use.

Introduce the song

Sing or chant the first line as a group and make yourself the first example. For example, 'My name's Cath and I like cookies'. Ask a few different students to have a turn to show they understand what they are required to do then go around the circle. Decide which direction to go around the circle.

Adapt

Once students know the song well, it can turn into a role play. Students can act out the objects/animals suggested and provide sound effects. For example, 'My name's Cath and I'm a tiger, ROAR!'/ 'This is Cath and she's a tiger, ROAR!'

Tune-in Song

Egocentric young students can become very immersed in what they are doing and this short song can be used throughout the day or week to get the group listening and ready for instructions. Once students are familiar with the song they can join in whenever they hear it.

Transition
Songs
for
5-8 yr olds

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Lyrics

It's time to get up,

it's time to get up.

Show me your ears,

when you're listening.

It's time to get up,

it's time to get up.

Show me your eyes,

are you looking?

Music tip

Add in body percussion.

Could a stomp, click or clap be added to the song?

Play with changing the pitch of the song.

Introduce the concept

What does it look like when someone is listening and ready to hear instructions?

Introduce the song

Introduce the song one verse at a time and incorporate actions to indicate listening and looking. Make the first two lines call and response. For example, 'Teacher: It's time to get up'. 'Students: It's time to get up'.

Adapt

Change the words from 'It's time to get up', to 'it's time to sit down' or 'it's time to tune in'.

Add in actions for each verse.

Simple Transition Song

This is a call and response transition song, with a repeating pattern that can be adapted based on any actions a group of students need to make; such as getting equipment, washing hands etc. Simple songs with repeating structures and melodies are easy to learn and they can support language development and help students understand what is expected of them.

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Lyrics and chords

C

Teacher: It is time to come to the floor.

G

C

Students: Come to the floor, come to the floor.

C

Teacher: It is time to come to the floor.

G

C

Students: Come to the floor right now!

All verses follow the same chords

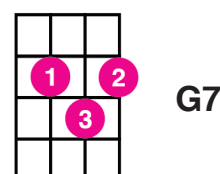
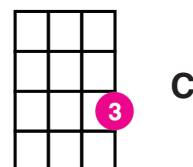
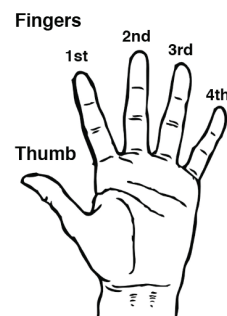
Teacher: It is time to get our books.

Students: Get our books, get our books.

Teacher: It is time to get our books.

Students: Get our books right now!

Ukulele chords



Music Tip

This song uses the same melody and the easiest chords for the 'London Bridge' song.

The audio recording is in a different key.

Introduce the concept

Explain the point of the song and ask students to brainstorm different actions they may need to do as a group during the day. Point out the fact that the example song has two verses with different instructions because we often need to complete more than one instruction in a transition.

Introduce the song

Sing a whole verse to students so that they can hear the melody. Have the lyrics visible as you are teaching the song. Discuss the points of repetition in the song and which parts they need to sing.

Adapt

Substitute any instructions into this song such as, 'it is time to get our bags', 'it is time for our roll call'. Fun instructions can also be introduced to give the class an energy boost, such as 'it is time for a silly stretch' 'it is time for a big yawn'. Students' ideas can also be incorporated.

Time to Get Up Song

This is a fun transition song that can motivate and direct students. Once students have completed the task described they can freeze as an object/ animal/character. Pairing classroom management with singing creates more opportunities for musical development and can help foster a calmer learning environment.



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Lyrics

Teacher: Time to get up and wash our hands.

Students: Time to get up and wash our hands.

Teacher: Time to get up and get our snacks.

Students: Time to get up and get our snacks.

Teacher: When you're ready freeze like a superhero!

Music tip

Choose a way of singing that matches the character/animal chosen.

For example, mice are squeaky and snakes are sneaky.

Introduce the concept

What is call and response? Can students think of any other songs that use it? It has been used a lot in African music and Gospel music, are any students familiar with these types of songs?

Introduce the song

The structure of this song means that very little teaching is required. Simply sing the line to students and have them repeat it back. Introduce cue signals to help students know when it is their turn (such as pointing) or when it's time to stop (such as a closed fist). Ensure students understand what is meant by the freeze described in the song. Brainstorming a list of things that students may be asked to freeze as (such as a golf ball, a teddy bear, Taylor Swift or Mickey Mouse).

Adapt

To simplify the song, sing only one instruction or break it into two steps 'time to get up and wash our hands/when you're ready, freeze like a superhero!' The words can be changed to suit any transition. Listen to phrasing/syllables pattern in the song and experiment with using other words or instructions.

Pack-up Song

This song prepares and supports students through a classroom clean up. Students can be given five minute and two minute song warnings that alert and motivate them to be ready to do their bit. Bursting into song is more fun than shouting and once students know the song they can sing-along.

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Lyrics and chords

First announcement

C **G7** **C**

Five minutes more.

C **G7** **C**

Five minutes more.

C

Finish up,

G7

finish up,

C **G7** **C**

five minutes more.

All verses follow the same chords

Second announcement

Two minutes more.

Two minutes more.

Packing up,

packing up,

two minutes more.

Call to action

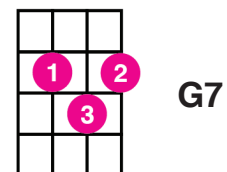
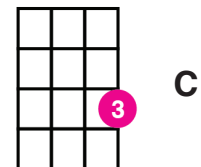
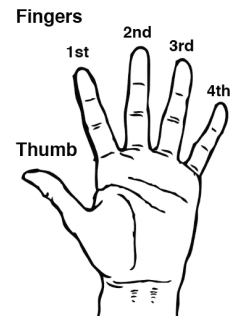
Packing up now!

Packing up now!

We are a team

and we're packing up now!

Ukulele chords



This song uses the same melody and the easiest chords for the 'Hot Cross Buns' song. The audio recording is in a different key.

Introduce the concept

Why are announcements useful? Is getting a pack-up warning useful? Whose job is it to keep the classroom tidy? What are all the tasks we need to do at pack up time? Consider writing a list of pack-up jobs and display these where students can see them.

Introduce the song

Consider singing each verse twice, starting with a louder voice and moving to a whisper once everyone is singing together.

Adapt

The song mentions five minutes and two minutes, what other measure of time could be used for the song (such as 60 seconds)?

Line-up Song

Getting small children to line-up can feel like herding cats. Use this song to guide and inspire students during this transition. The simple song structure makes it easy to adapt the song to incorporate students' ideas.

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Lyrics and chords

First verse

C

Form a line and follow the leader.

G

Form a line and follow the leader.

C

Form a line and follow the leader.

G7

C

Line up at the door!

All verses follow the same chords

Form a line and be a tiger.

Form a line and be a tiger.

Form a line and be a tiger.

Line up at the door!

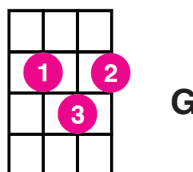
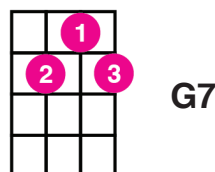
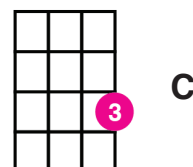
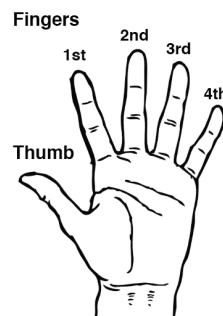
Form a line and walk on tiptoes.

Form a line and walk on tiptoes.

Form a line and walk on tiptoes.

Line up at the door!

Ukulele chords



Music tip

This song uses the same melody and the easiest chords for the 'Ten Little Indians' song.

The audio recording is in a different key.

Introduce the concept

Why do we line-up? How can we work as a team? What are the different ways we can travel together as a group (such as marching, skipping or striding)? Will we travel in pairs, start moving as soon as the song begins, or wait for the teacher to cue us?

Introduce the song

Have the song lyrics visible when you are teaching the song and have students count how many times lines are repeated. Once students know the song they can offer new words. For example, 'form a line and be a mouse'. Encourage quiet, gentle or stealthy animals for a smoother transition.

Adapt

Use this song for other transitions 'i.e. 'Find a partner and sit down x 3, find your partner now!'

Add in sound effects. For example, if students are being tigers they can roar at the end of each line

Emotions Song

Emotions have a huge effect on how students perform at school and yet many students have limited emotional literacy. This song can be used as an opportunity to check in with how students are feeling or to foster students interpersonal skill development. This song starts by exploring happiness and sadness but can be used to explore other feelings.



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Lyrics

How are they feeling today?

How are they feeling today?

They're happy and smiling, happy and smiling.

That's how they're feeling today.

Music Tip

Can students sing in a voice that expresses these emotions?

This could be grumpy and low and grizzly or excited and fast and chirpy.

Introduce the concept

Brainstorm different emotions and discuss how these feel in the body. For example, when you're scared you may feel sick in the belly or your breathing might change. This song can be paired with imagery, puppets or emoticons that demonstrates different kinds of feelings people may have.

Introduce the song

Use the feeling ideas that students have generated and put these into the song. For example, 'they're angry and tense, angry and tense. That's how they're feeling today.'

Adapt

Encourage students to add in facial expressions or gestures that express each emotion.

Brain Break Song

Young students are kinesthetic beings with short attention spans and they require support to stay focused. This brain break song energises and relaxes students to support wellbeing and engagement. It can be especially useful when students have been sitting as a group for too long.

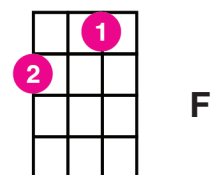
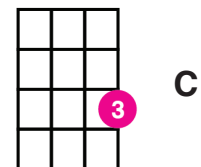
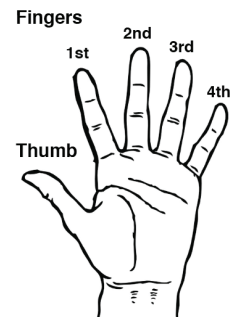
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Lyrics and chords

F
Shake it up high and shake it down low,
C
shake it around away we go.
F
Wriggle and jiggle it all about,
C **F**
jump up high and then sit down.
F
Wiggle your fingers in the air,
C
tap your shoulders here and there.
F
Take a big breath, and slow right down,
C **F**
now your ready nice and calm.

Ukulele chords



Music tip

This song uses the same melody and the easiest chords for the 'Skip to my Lou' song.

The audio recording is in a different key.

Introduce the concept

What does a stressed body feel like? What does a calm body feel like? What is good about taking a big breath?

Introduce the song

The first verse can be taught with students standing up. Sing the song two lines at a time and have students copy. Extend this into the second verse. Sing the whole song at least three times to build students' confidence and then introduce the actions described in the song.

Adapt

Extend the song by singing each verse multiple times and use different types of voices (such as gruff or posh), dynamics (louder or softer) or different tempos. The song can be used as an introduction to a relaxation session.

Spelling Song

Integrating singing with other curriculum areas can support engagement and memory retention. This song can create a playful avenue to develop word skills throughout the day or serve as an energy boost during literacy learning.

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Lyrics and chords

C G C

All: Tell me how it's spelt.

C G C

All: What letters are in the word?

Teacher: Cat?

Student: C A T (hopefully).

F

G

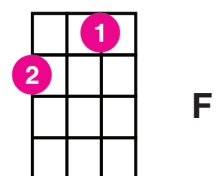
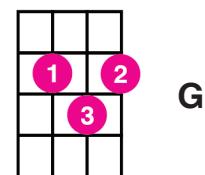
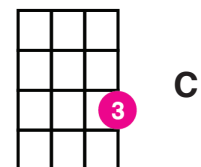
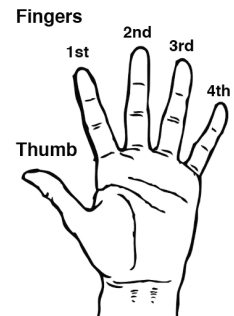
Teacher: That's right, correct! You got it right (or 'not quite this time, let's try again')!

G

C

All: That's is how it's spelt.

Ukulele chords



Music tip

This song uses the same melody and the easiest chords for the 'Hickory Dickory Dock' song. The audio recording is in a different key.

Introduce the concept

Pick a word and invite students to raise hands and have a go of spelling it, there is the option to start using words that are visible to students. Pick an individual student or get the whole class to respond. Celebrate effort and if they get it wrong simply substitute the correct letters.

Introduce the song

Get children moving while they sing this song. Can they march in time with the beat? Once they have sung the song a few times add in some body percussion. Where in the song could a clap, click or stomp fit?

Adapt

Make the activity easier by focusing on letter sounds i.e Teacher: 'Tell me what you hear..CH' 'What letter/s could it be? Student: 'C..H..'. Alternatively, make the activity harder by having a student lead the song for a small or large group. Students can use flash cards to support this.

Literacy Time Song

Why yell when you can sing? Young students thrive in a routined, calm environment and this playful song can be used to alert all students that a literacy learning session is about to begin. Introduce to the song at any moment and challenge everyone to be singing together before it finishes!

Transition
Songs
for
5-8 yr olds

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

Lyrics

Foodily doodily woodily woo.

Are these some words you would listen to?

Bobbidy, wobbity, dibbity dook.

Are these some words you would find in a book?

It's literacy time! It's literacy time!

Come and find out what you'd find in a book!

Music tip

Try singing the song in different ways.

Sing with a baby voice, deep voice, soft voice, loud voice or cowboy voice.

Introduce the concept

Discuss transitions and attention cues. For example, some teachers use whistles, clapping patterns or call and response phrases like "Aussie, Aussie, Aussie/Oi Oi Oi". Explain that this song is a fun and useful way to let everyone know that a literacy session is about to start. What materials will they need? Where should they be?

Introducing the song

Start by singing the entire song to the class. Then use the call and response method for each line and then each half of the song. There is the option to always sing this song line by line as a call and response song. The word 'literacy' can be changed to something more specific like 'reading', or 'writing'.

Adapt

How can the song be extended? Repeat certain parts of the song multiple times and play with fun nonsense voices. For example, 'It's literacy time' (sung high pitched), 'it's literacy time' (sung very slowly).

Try adding in body percussion. For example, students can add a high five at the end of the song.

Sequence Song

This maths focused call and response song challenges students to make quick calculations in their head. It can be integrated during maths to support engagement or used as a brain break and practice opportunity at other times.

Transition
Songs
for
5-8 yr olds

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Lyrics and chords

C G C

Teacher: Tell me what comes next?

C G C

Teacher: What number comes after four?

Student: Five (hopefully).

F

Teacher: That's right it's five! (or 'not quite right'),

Students: Yay!

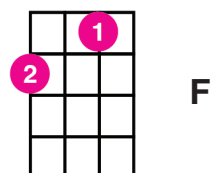
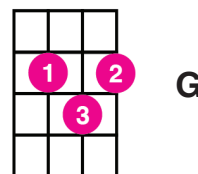
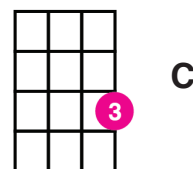
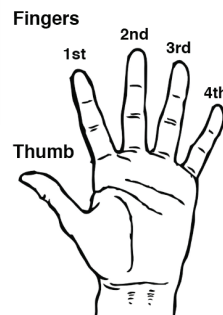
F G

Teacher: That's right it's five! (or 'not quite right'),

G C

All: Five comes after four.

Ukulele chords



Music Tip

This song uses the same melody and the easiest chords for the 'Hickory Dickory Dock' song.

The audio recording is in a different key.

Introduce the concept

Start with concrete counting materials or visual aids such as hands or a hundred chart. Pick a number and invite students to quickly raise their hand to practice answering 'What number comes next'? Celebrate effort and if they get it wrong simply substitute the correct answer (as above).

Introduce the song

Display the song lyrics and explain that this is a song to help students practice counting in their head. Establish a cue such as pointing so that a student knows if it's their turn to answer or invite the whole class to respond together.

Adapt

Once students know the tune, more complex numbers or sequences can be substituted and explored through the song such as skip counting or months of the year.

Goodbye Song

This song can support a smooth transition out the door at the end of a session or at the end of the day when students are tired and losing focus. It can also be used as a regular avenue to reflect on learning and positive experiences.

Transition
Songs
for
5-8 yr olds

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Lyrics and chords

C

Goodbye everyone,

G7

thanks for the fun

C

G7

and thanks for _____ (your company, the funny jokes etc).

F

C

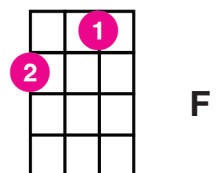
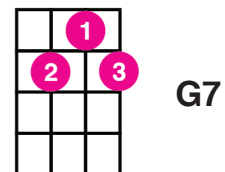
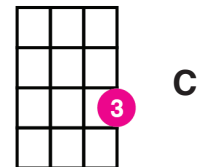
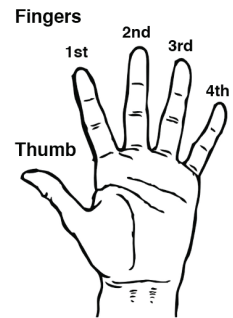
This is goodbye but we'll see you soon,

G7

C

so until then goodbye my friends.

Ukulele chords



Introduce the concept

Brainstorm activities, learning or special moments from the session/ day. This could be an individual activity or a class list. It may take too long to include all students ideas in the song so pick a few or rotate through the whole class over several sessions.

Introduce the song

Encourage students to come up with actions that will help them remember the song. Once the students know the song, play with changing the dynamics (the volume). How loudly or softly can they sing the song or specific words?

Music tip

This song uses the same melody and the easiest chords for the 'Hey Diddle Diddle' song. The audio recording is in a different key.

Adapt

Add in new actions each sessions. Actions can be brainstormed as group. If someone's favourite part of the day was the silly game, students can come up with an action to demonstrate the silly game.