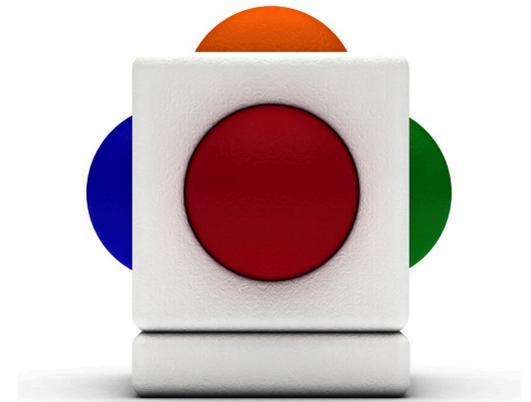


Lesson Autumn Leaves

Lesson time - 30 minutes with 2 Skoogs



In this lesson

- Taking inspiration from experiences and from nature
- Improvising with the pentatonic scale
- Co-operating and working as a group to create a musical work
- Playing music with each other and listening to each other in the process
- Playing with a backing track



Learning Outcomes

Reference with Music Curriculum for Excellence:

- **EARLY (EXA 0-17a)** I have the freedom to use my voice, musical instruments and music technology to discover and enjoy playing with sound and rhythm.
- **FIRST (EXA 1-17a)** I can use my voice, musical instruments and music technology to discover and enjoy playing with sound, rhythm, pitch and dynamics.

Reference with Technological Developments in Society Curriculum for Excellence:

- **EARLY (TCH 0-01a)** I enjoy playing with and exploring technologies to discover what they can do and how they can help us.

Reference with Social Studies Curriculum for Excellence:

- **EARLY (SOC 0-07a)** I explore and discover the interesting features of my local environment to develop an awareness of the world around me.

Support Materials

These can be used as introduction songs and music:

- The song [Autumn Leaves](#) from the book [It's Time to Fly](#) by Niki Davies, published by Out of the Ark
- The song [Autumn Leaves](#) by [Frank Sinatra](#)
- Vivaldi's [Autumn](#) from the [Four Seasons](#), performed by [Nigel Kennedy](#) and the [English Chamber Orchestra](#)

Lesson with progression and or differentiation.

Moira Thorburn
Music Specialist - City of Edinburgh



In this autumn themed lesson, we are going to create a piece of music together as a class, inspired by the falling autumn leaves.

1. Listen and warm up

Teach the class [Autumn Leaves](#) from the [It's Time to Fly](#) book, and listen to [Frank Sinatra's Autumn Leaves](#). If you have older pupils in your class, you might want to add [Autumn](#) from the [Four Seasons](#) by [Vivaldi](#) as well.

2. Have a feel

If possible, take your pupils outside to experience first hand autumn leaves falling from the tree. Discuss and get them to describe how the leaves are falling.

3. Word wall

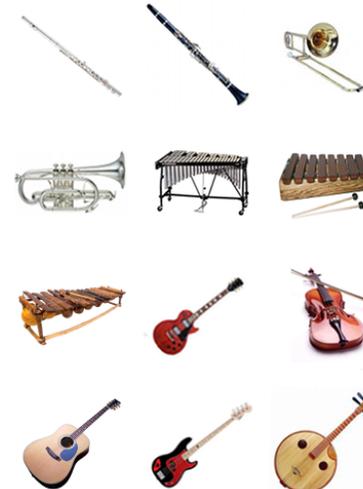
When back in the classroom, make a word wall describing what was seen outside. Pupils might use words like [drifting](#), [floating](#), [smooth](#), etc.

4. Explore instrument sounds

We will now create a piece of music to describe what we saw with the falling leaves. Discuss with the pupils what instruments they think might be good for our melody - first by discussing the various families of instruments and then the pitch of instruments to narrow down the choices. Have a listen to these instruments by setting your Skoog to them.

You can first of all explore the dynamic instruments, which will give you more control over expressivity:

1. In the Skoogmusic software, go to the [Instruments Tab](#) .
2. Click on one of the 12 instruments.



You can also try MIDI, which will give you access to the 128 different sounds on your computer sound card:

1. First of all let's switch on MIDI - go to the [MIDI Tab](#) .
2. Click on the red [MIDI On/Off](#) button so that it turns green.



3. If you want MIDI sound only, check the [Mute](#) box near the bottom left corner of the Skoog Window.
4. Pick from one of 128 different MIDI sounds in the MIDI instrument menu on the [MIDI Tab](#), just right next to the MIDI button. Make sure [MIDI Channel](#) is set to one of [MIDI 1-10](#), and not Percussion. MIDI instruments have no effect on the Percussion channel.
5. However, if it is percussion sounds that you are after, pick [Percussion](#) under the [MIDI Channel](#) menu. Here, each note will play a different percussion sound - so pick the ones you want in the [Notes Tab](#) (remember to select [User Defined](#) first).

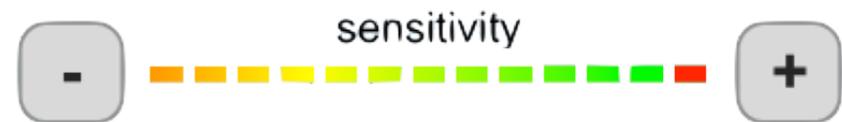
Decide on which two instruments you want to use in our music, and set up your two Skoogs with these two instruments using the instructions above.

5. Adjust sensitivity

While exploring all the different instruments and sounds, you might find it helpful to adjust the sensitivity.

This is for when you want to increase the sensitivity for all five sides of your Skoog uniformly - so they all increase by the same amount.

1. Go to the [Skoog Tab](#) , and locate the [sensitivity bar](#) near the bottom of the tab.

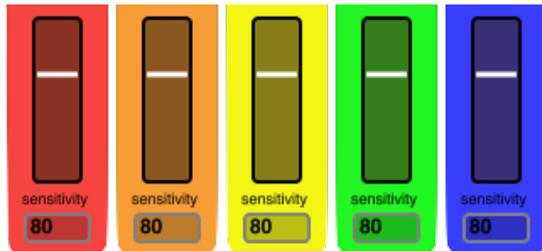


2. Click on the **+** sign if you want to increase sensitivity, or if you want to decrease it, click on the **-** sign.
3. All sides on your Skoog should now be more/less sensitive!



If you want to adjust the sensitivity by different amounts on each side, then the [Settings Tab](#) is where you can go:

1. Decide which side you want to adjust, and find its sensitivity slider close to the bottom of the [Settings Tab](#) (they are all colour coded!):



2. Grab the white line on the slider with your mouse, and drag it up to increase sensitivity - or drag it down to lower sensitivity. The number in the [Sensitivity Number Box](#) should change accordingly. Let go of your mouse when you find the optimal level.
3. Press into the side that you have just changed and see if you like its sensitivity - adjust again if it is still not perfect.

WHY? You might wonder why you would want to change the sides' sensitivity individually: it will make it easier for you to play in different alternative ways! Have a look at [Lesson 1: The Basics](#) in the [User Guide](#).

6. Pick a scale

Now that you have picked your instruments, we will select a couple of pentatonic scales to put on the Skoogs.

NOTE Pentatonic scale is a set of 5 notes that are commonly used in folk music. It is also great as a palette of notes for improvisation, as every combination of notes within the scale will sound nice; hence no risk of playing a 'wrong' note! To learn more about them have a look at our [Notes on Pentatonic Scales](#) on our website (www.skoogmusic.com/sites/default/files/downloads/PENTATONICS.pdf).

1. Go to the [Notes Tab](#) 
2. In the [Scale](#) menu underneath the keyboard, select either [Major](#) or [Minor](#) Pentatonic.
3. In the [Tonic](#) box on the [Notes Tab](#), select the name for the key that you want.
4. Have a play with both [Major](#) and [Minor](#) keys, and experiment with putting different combinations of keys on the two Skoogs; remember they do not have to be in the same key! (Major on one, Minor on another; experiment!).



7. Invent a melody

We will start with just one Skoog first - get your pupils to invent a melody on it. Discuss with the class how they want to play their melodies too - **legato** (smooth and flowing) or **staccato** (detached and 'jumpy').

8. Play!

Again, we will start with just one Skoog. Let pupils take individual turns on it. Encourage them to be creative with how they play it; for example, play long notes by moving the whole Skoog in their hands to create a continued legato sound, or press into corners to play chords.

In time, introduce the second Skoog. Encourage pupil to listen to each other when playing together.

9. Backing loop

The class might decide to add a loop in the background; here is how you will do it from within the Skoogmusic software (make sure the loop you will be using is in **.wav**, **.aif**, or **.mp3** format):

1. The **Backing Loop Player** is located in the Skoogmusic Window across the top of the screen.



2. Locate your backing track of choice in your file browser.
3. Click and drag your backing track sound file across to the Skoogmusic Window, and drop it in the bubble that says **Drop Loop Here**.
4. When the border of the bubble stops blinking and the player reads **Ready**, the sound file has finished being imported. Click **Play** to start playing the backing track.
5. Go wild on your Skoog! If you want to control the volume of your backing track, just drag and adjust the slider in the loop player. You can also pan your backing track to the left and right too.
6. The player will loop the track when it ends. Click **Stop** to stop playing.



FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES For less able pupils, this lesson could be simplified by using cut outs of leaves in autumnal colour as simple score, and to encourage the playing of the Skoog. The colours of the Skoog lend themselves perfectly for this (blue can be used as the sky for instance). The more able pupils can use the coloured leaves to compose their own score. This activity is also useful in laying the foundation and skills required for reading official Skoog scores.



For more information

For more ideas on creating music with the Skoog, see [Chapter 6](#) of the Skoogmusic User's Guide.

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