

Gr. 6 Music - Ukuleles and Western European Music Notation

Lesson objective:

For students to start to learn how to read Western European music notation and apply it to an instrument.

Task

To read a C major scale in Western European notation and play it on the ukulele.

Intent

Students will start to understand how to translate notes in Western European music notation to their ukuleles. In Canada, the vast majority of musicians read and write music using Western European notation. While this is a very colonial way of understanding music, it is still important for students in Canada to understand. If our students wish to continue their music making outside of school, knowledge of Western European music notation is a valuable tool to have. It is important for students to understand that this is just one system of music notation.

Criteria

Students will:

- Find a letter name of a note on a staff. (Starting on middle C and ascending).

- Find that same letter name on their ukulele and play it.

- Do this for the first 3-5 notes of the C major scale. (CDEFG). Most students should be able to reach this criteria. Some may fall short (0 - 2 notes) and others may exceed (all notes of the scale).

Curricular connections

5–8 *M–L2.2* “Read, write, and perform from music notation, as required for playing and/or singing a variety of repertoire.”

3–8 *M–L3.5* “Demonstrate understanding that melodies are created from a particular set of tones (modes).”

Materials needed:

Ukuleles

TV

Ukulele fingering chart (will be shown on TV)

C major scale and note names (will be on white board and on individual papers)

White board

Chairs

Music stands

Prior Knowledge:

Students have learned the note names of finger positions on their ukulele of a C major scale in 1st position.

Students have learned how to read notes (C major scale) on a Western European musical staff that correspond with the same notes they've learned to play on the ukulele.

Assessment:

For learning:

Walk throughout the class to ensure students are staying on task and understand the process.

As learning:

Ask students to turn to a partner and quiz them on their note reading ability. Tell them to point to a note on the staff and ask their partner to play it.

For learning:

Ask students one at a time to play a note that you point to on the board.

Next steps:

After most students are able to play the whole scale we can apply it to reading songs.

Learning note values and rhythms is another step to be able to fully read Western European music notation.

Differentiation possibilities:

If any students are having difficulty finding the notes on their ukulele, they could use a xylophone instead, as the notes are clearly labeled.

Students can move their chairs to sit closer to the TV if they have trouble reading the notes.