

Desktop Samba Pack Lesson Plans

Resource two of two



from **PERCUSSION** *Plus*

Key stage 1
Ages 5–7, Years 1–2

Lesson Structure

Learning Objectives

- Maintain a steady pulse while performing confidently alongside others.
- Identify, describe, and compare percussion sounds using simple musical vocabulary.
- Listen carefully and respond accurately to the samba whistle by following start and stop signals.
- Perform simple rhythmic patterns with increasing accuracy as part of an ensemble.
- Recognise and name a range of traditional Brazilian samba instruments.

Preparation and room setup

Arrange the class in a large circle, with instruments either placed in the centre or distributed to pupils in advance. Organise the instruments into loose family groups—for example, tamborims and pandeiros together, guiros and reco-recos together, agogo bells and shakers together, with the repinique positioned to one side for easy access.

Have a short (two to three minute) recording of live samba music ready to play at the start of the lesson.

Key vocabulary

Pulse, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, timbre, texture, samba, percussion, ensemble.

Lesson Structure

Starter:

Sounds from Brazil (7 mins)

- Begin by playing the samba recording for approximately ninety seconds without any introduction. Ask pupils to listen carefully and not speak.

Teacher asks:

- What did you notice about the music?
Consider the instruments, rhythms, tempo, or dynamics
- What did the music make you think of or feel?
Did it create a particular mood, image, or atmosphere?

- Introduce each instrument one at a time
- Hold up each instrument, briefly demonstrate how it sounds, and clearly tell pupils its name.

Invite a volunteer to have a turn playing the instrument before introducing the next one, encouraging careful listening and respectful handling throughout.



Lesson Structure

Activity One:

Instrument Sorting (8-10 mins)

Place all instruments in the centre of the circle

Ask pupils to sort the instruments into two groups:

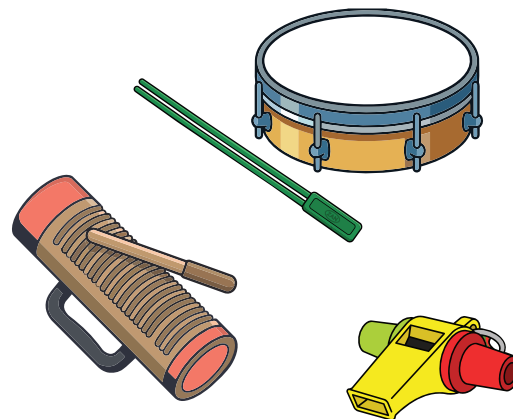
those that are hit or tapped, and those that are scraped or shaken. This should be a physical, non-verbal sorting activity, lasting approximately three minutes.

Bring the class together to discuss the results, encouraging pupils to explain how they decided where each instrument belonged.

Introduce the musical term **timbre**, explaining that it describes the unique quality or character of an instrument's sound.

Teacher asks:

- Which instrument has the **scratchiest** timbre?
- Which instrument has the **brightest** timbre?
- Which instrument has the **deepest** or **warmest** timbre?



Lesson Structure

Activity Two:

Pulse Engine (15 mins)

- ◆ Distribute the instruments to the class.
- ◆ Begin by clapping a steady pulse:
one, two, three, four; one, two, three, four.
Pupils echo the pulse using:
 - Clapping
 - Knee taps
 - Body percussion
- ◆ Once the pulse is secure, introduce the instruments gradually:
 - Shakers and guiros first
 - Tamborims and pandeiros next
 - Agogo bells and reco-recos last

Repeat the activity up to four times, encouraging pupils to maintain a steady pulse as each new layer of sound is added.

- ◆ Bring the class together to discuss what they noticed. Teacher asks:
 - What happened to the **texture** of the music as more instruments joined in?
 - Did the sound become thicker or thinner?
 - How did adding different instruments change the overall effect?
- ◆ Introduce the musical term **texture**, explaining that it describes how many layers of sound can be heard in a piece of music and how those layers combine.

Lesson Structure

Differentiation

Pupils needing additional support should play the steady pulse only (one beat per count) on a shaker or guiro. Pupils who are ready for greater challenge can play on every other beat (beats 2 and 4 only), requiring more careful listening and accurate timing.

The pupil playing the repinique can take on a leadership role by maintaining the pulse for the rest of the ensemble to follow.



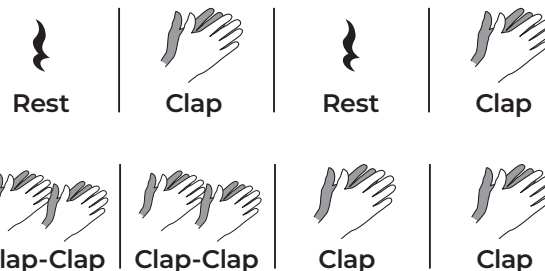
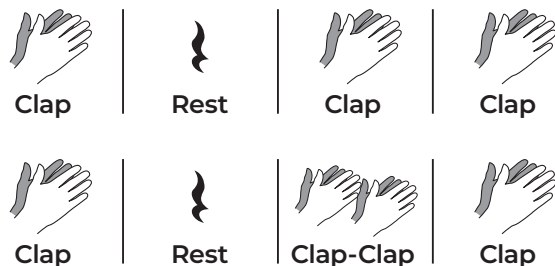
Lesson Structure

Activity Three:

Call and Response (15 mins)

- Play or clap a short rhythm for the class to **listen to**. Pupils echo the rhythm using their instruments. Begin with very simple patterns before gradually increasing the level of challenge.

For example:



As pupils become more confident, invite volunteers to create and lead their own rhythm patterns for the class to echo.

Layered Ensemble Activity

Once pupils are secure with the echo activity, divide the class into two groups. One group maintains a steady pulse on their instruments while the other performs the echoed rhythm patterns. This creates a simple two-layer musical texture. After approximately two minutes, swap the groups so that all pupils experience both roles.

Lesson Structure

- Bring the class together to discuss the activity.

Teacher asks:

- What is the difference between a **pulse** and a **rhythm**?
- Which was easier to maintain: the steady pulse or the rhythm pattern?
- How did the music change when both layers were played together?

- Reinforce that a **pulse** is the steady beat that remains constant throughout the music, whereas a **rhythm** is a pattern of long and short sounds performed over the pulse.

Differentiation

Pupils needing additional support should echo only the steady pulse (four even beats) rather than the rhythm pattern. Pupils ready for greater challenge can compose their own two-bar rhythm pattern, teach it to a partner, and then lead the class in an echo performance. For an additional leadership challenge, appoint a pupil as the conductor, using the samba whistle to cue the ensemble and signal when the echo should begin.

Lesson Structure

Activity Four:

Samba Groove (10 mins)

- Build on the skills developed in the previous activities by performing a simple whole-class samba groove using three musical layers.

Layer 1: Foundation

Repinique and pandeiros maintain a steady four-beat pulse throughout.

Layer 2: Rhythm

Tamborims and agogo bells perform a simple repeating pattern:



Clap



Rest



Clap



Rest

Layer 3: Texture

Guiros, reco-recos and shakers play continuously, scraping or shaking on every beat to create a rich background texture.

Introduce each layer one at a time, using clear hand signals to cue each group to begin. Allow pupils to listen to how the ensemble grows as each new layer is added.

- Once all three layers are playing together confidently, conduct a simple dynamics exercise. Raise your hands to signal the music should gradually become louder and lower them to indicate it should become quieter. Repeat this sequence approximately four times, encouraging pupils to watch carefully and respond together.

Introduce the musical term dynamics, explaining that it describes how loud or quiet the music is.

Lesson Structure

Differentiation

Layer 3 (texture instruments) is the most accessible and is well suited to pupils who require additional support.

Layer 2 provides a greater challenge, as pupils must maintain a repeating rhythmic pattern while listening to the ensemble.

The most confident pupils can take on the role of conductor, using the samba whistle and hand signals to cue entries and control the dynamics, demonstrating a high level of musical independence and leadership.



Lesson Structure

Plenary:

Reflection (10 mins)

- **Play the same samba recording used in the starter activity.**
- **Ask pupils whether the music sounds different now that they have experienced playing samba instruments themselves.** Encourage them to listen carefully and identify details they may not have noticed before.
- **Lead a whole-class discussion using questions such as:**
 - What is the name of this style of music and which country does it come from?
 - Can you name two of the samba instruments we used today?

- What is the difference between a **pulse** and a **rhythm**?
- What musical word describes the unique sound quality of an instrument? (timbre)
- What musical word describes how loud or quiet the music is? (dynamics)
- What did you enjoy most about performing as part of a samba ensemble?

- **Use pupils' responses to reinforce the key musical vocabulary and concepts explored throughout the lesson**, celebrating their progress in listening, performing, and working together as an ensemble.

Assessment summary



Working towards:

The pupil can hold and handle their instrument appropriately and produces a sound when prompted. With support, they respond to the samba whistle signals and stop playing when required. They may be able to echo a steady pulse but are not yet consistently able to reproduce a rhythm pattern. They can identify whether music is loud or quiet.

Expected:

The pupil plays their instrument with control and purpose, maintaining a steady pulse as part of the ensemble. They respond independently to whistle cues and can echo a simple four-beat rhythm

pattern accurately. They use at least two pieces of musical vocabulary correctly, such as pulse, timbre, loud, or quiet, when describing their playing or the music they hear.

Greater depth:

The pupil confidently maintains their part within a multi-layer samba ensemble while keeping a secure pulse and listening carefully to others. They use musical vocabulary independently to describe elements such as texture, dynamics, and timbre. They can lead a call-and-response pattern or conduct dynamic changes for the group, demonstrating a strong understanding of how musical elements can be shaped, controlled, and combined.

Extension and follow-up



For a second lesson or as a homework activity, pupils could be asked to explore examples of Brazilian samba or carnival music at home. They can bring back one word to describe how the music made them feel, encouraging them to connect musical listening with personal responses and emotions.

The **Meet the Instruments resource** from this pack can be used as a reading activity or displayed in the classroom as an ongoing reference point throughout the unit. Pupils can use it to revisit instrument names, families, and key musical vocabulary.

Pupils who are ready for further challenge could create their own four-beat rhythm pattern, give it a name, and teach it to a partner or the wider group, developing their confidence as composers and musical leaders.



SEND and accessibility guidance

Motor and physical needs

The guiro and reco-reco can be placed securely on a non-slip mat or surface so that pupils do not need to grip and hold the instrument while playing. The tamborim can be rested on the knee or a cushioned surface rather than held in the air, reducing the physical demands of playing.

Pandeiro jingles respond to even very gentle movement, making them accessible for pupils who may have limited strength or grip. Agogo bells and metal shakers can both be played using one hand and do not require a specific technique to produce an effective musical sound.

These adaptations allow all pupils to participate confidently while focusing on the key musical skills of pulse, rhythm, listening, and ensemble playing.

Sensory needs

Before any loud collective playing, give the class a clear warning by using a visual countdown (three fingers, two fingers, one finger) before sounding the whistle cue. This helps pupils anticipate changes in volume and prepare for louder sections of music.

Pupils who find high volumes challenging can be offered an alternative role, such as pulse keeper, using a quieter instrument such as a shaker or guiro and positioned slightly away from the centre of the ensemble.

Ear defenders should be available as a normal classroom resource, with their use encouraged when needed rather than drawing attention to individual pupils. This supports all pupils in participating comfortably and confidently in the musical activity.

SEND and accessibility guidance

Communication and language needs

Use the instrument family sorting activity (see Starter) as a non-verbal engagement activity before pupils are expected to contribute verbally. This provides an accessible way for all pupils to participate and demonstrate their understanding.

Display key vocabulary words visually throughout the lesson to support recognition, recall, and confident use of musical language.

During class discussions, accept a range of responses, including pointing, gesture, facial expression, or single words, as valid ways for pupils to share their ideas.

Provide opportunities for pupils to communicate in different ways while developing their confidence in listening, performing, and responding as part of the ensemble.

Cognitive and attention needs

Keep instruction sequences to a maximum of two steps at a time to support understanding, processing, and successful participation. Where appropriate, pair pupils who need additional support with a confident neighbour whose playing they can observe and follow.

The pulse-keeping role, using steady shaking or scraping, is the most accessible entry point and can be assigned to pupils who find more complex rhythm patterns challenging. This allows pupils to contribute confidently while developing their sense of timing and ensemble awareness.

Prepare visual pulse cards in advance for pupils who benefit from a concrete reference point. A simple grid of four boxes representing the four beats can help pupils follow the structure of the pulse and support accurate participation.

SEND and accessibility guidance

Curriculum links

- Play tuned and untuned instruments with increasing musical control, accuracy, and expression
- Use voices creatively and expressively through spoken chants, rhymes, and rhythmic vocal activities
- Listen attentively and with understanding to a diverse range of high-quality live and recorded music
- Experiment with, create, select, and combine sounds while exploring the inter-related dimensions of music

