

# Activity 14 – Animal Orchestra

## Aspect 2

General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds

## Strand

Talking about sounds

### Purpose

This activity is designed to give children the opportunity to listen to various musical instruments and other sound-making objects, to identify them and to use them creatively. It requires the children to match the objects to specific kinds of sounds and to talk about sounds.

### You Will Need

- A selection of simple musical instruments (e.g. triangle, bells, maracas, tambourine, shakers, etc.) and some home-made sound-making objects or instruments (e.g. gravel, pebbles, rice in various kitchen containers, etc.). Ideally, each child in the class should have an instrument to play.
- Some pictures of various animals or a variety of animal puppets or toys (optional).

### Preparation

- Lay the musical instruments and sound objects on a table.
- Decide on a short list of animals that make different kinds of sounds or have very different physical characteristics. The children will work in groups of four or five, and each group will need an animal to discuss, so the number of animals required will depend on the number of groups. The following animals are suggested: **lion, elephant, snake, seal, eagle, monkey.**

### Introducing the Activity

- Explain to the children that they are going to think about the sounds that animals make and then play some musical instruments to try to make these sounds themselves.
- Ask the children if any of them can make the sound of an animal. (They need to put their hand up if they can – they should *not* spontaneously start making animal noises!) You could do an impression of a dog barking or a cat meowing if nobody comes forward.

### The Activity

- Organise the children into groups of four or five and allocate an animal to each group. Ask each group to work together to talk about what sounds the animal makes. What words would they use to describe the sounds? (e.g. for a lion – fierce, roaring, loud, scary, etc.)
- Monitor the group discussions and help the children if they are stuck. If they are not sure what sound an animal makes, they should guess.
- Ask each group in turn to come to the table of instruments and choose the ones that best match the animal they have been assigned.
- When each group has their instruments, allow them to practise. If there aren't enough instruments to go round, then some children could make the animal sounds vocally. Afterwards, ask the class to be quiet, as each group takes turns to play their instruments and make their animal sounds vocally.

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- The other groups should listen as each group makes their animal's sounds. The children can then discuss the group's animal sounds as a class. Can they guess what the animal was? Were the group's sounds a good effort? Were they too loud, too fierce, etc.?

This can then be repeated for each group.

- Finally, you could conduct an animal orchestra, with all the children ready to play. The children should only play when you call out that animal's name, but you could gradually introduce all the animals until the entire "orchestra" is playing.

## Support

- Make sure that each child in the groups has a chance to participate and that one child isn't dominating and choosing all of the instruments.
- Note how well the children use their voices and instruments imaginatively to represent the animal sounds. Note how well they choose appropriate words to describe the different animal sounds that they hear. How skilfully are they able to express an opinion about what they have heard?

Book link

**Animal Sounds**  
(Ransom Reading Stars,  
Phase One reader)

