



MECHANICAL VS. ANIMAL NOISES

Grade: K-2

Objectives:

Students will discuss what kinds of things make a piece of music sound “mechanical” or “animal”

Students will identify classroom instruments by name and discuss what kinds of sounds they make

Students will interpret music through contrasting creative movements

Students will use these creative movements while stepping to a steady beat

Indiana Music Standards

K.2.2 Maintain a steady beat while playing an instrument in a group

K.8.1 Describe musical concepts of high or low, fast or slow, and loud or soft through moving or drawing.

1.2.2 Maintain a steady beat on a percussion instrument while playing in a group.

1.6.1 Show changes in tempo, dynamics, and mood using movement in response to music.

1.6.2 Identify various vocal, instrumental, and environmental sounds.

2.2.2 Maintain a steady beat and play with appropriate dynamic levels.

2.2.4 Learn correct names for classroom instruments and identify those associated with world cultures.

2.6.1 Identify contrasts and changes in tempo and dynamics using basic music terminology and movement.

2.6.3 Identify groups of classroom instruments by sight and sound.

2.7.2 Listen to and compare two contrasting styles of composition using basic musical terminology.

Resources and Materials:

Instruments (woods, skins, metals, novelty instruments)

Musical examples

-“Animal” music: Saint-Saëns “Carnival of the Animals” (“The Elephant” and “The Swan” are great choices!)

-“Mechanical” music: Arthur Honegger’s “Pacific 231”

[Click the starburst to hear this piece on Youtube.com!](#)

These selections are only examples, and can be easily replaced with other pieces of music if you like!

Activity:

Introduction

What does the word mechanical mean? What are some mechanical sounds you can think of? (boing, ding, etc.) Now what are some animal sounds you can think of?

Example Questions

- *What instruments sound mechanical and why?*
- *What instruments sound like animals and why?*
- *How do animals move?*
- *How would a mechanical animal move?*
- *How can music sound “mechanical?”*
- *How can music sound like an animal?*



Procedure

1. **Listen and Discuss:** Play a clip from “The Carnival of the Animals” and ask students to listen to see if they think the music represents an animal or a machine. If animal, what kind? Play a clip from “Pacific 231” and ask the same kinds of questions.
2. **Classroom Instrument Examples:** Explain that the kinds of instruments used in a piece of music can make a big difference in how it sounds to the audience. Find some classroom instruments that sound mechanical or like animals and discuss why they sound that way.
3. **The Role of Context:** Some instruments may seem mechanical AND animal depending on the context. For example, a *guiro* may sound like a grinding gear or like a bullfrog in the swamp!
4. **Expressive Movement:** Tell students that they will be listening to the example from Carnival of the Animals again, but this time they can move around the room like the animal depicted in the song. Then the students will hear “Pacific 231” and will move like machines or robots.
5. **Qualities of Mechanical and Animal Movements:** When the students return to their spots, ask “What kinds of things did you do with your body to make it look like that animal? What about to make it look more mechanical?”
 - Are the movements jerky or smooth?
 - Are the movements big or small?
 - Are they fast or slow?
6. **Mechanical Movements to Steady Beat:** Ask students to pretend that they have all been turned into robots! Select a few “mechanical” instruments and tell the students that when they hear one noise (ex. finger cymbal) they will walk forward to the beat like a robot. However, when they here this noise (ex. cowbell) they will walk backward to the beat. Begin to play a steady beat, varying tempos and intervals between instruments.
 - Extensions
 - Select a third instrument that signals students to turn in place.
 - Select students to come and lead the class in movement.
7. **Optional Game:** Students sit in a circle, with one student in the middle. The Teacher holds up two instruments, one that signals the student in the middle to walk forward and one that signals the student in the middle to slowly turn in place. The two instruments are then handed out to two students in the circle. The student in the middle hides their eyes while the teacher gives another student a token (beanbag, button, etc.) to hide in their hands. All students sit with hands closed in lap throughout the game. The middle student opens their eyes, and it is the job of the two instrumentalists to guide him or her to the token as accurately as possible by taking turns playing a steady beat that signals the student to walk or turn in place.