

Preparatory Unit: Introduction to the pBuzz

This stand-alone mini-unit should be completed before you tackle the rest of the scheme.

It is made up of 5 x 10 minute sessions designed to be delivered on consecutive days over the course of a week.

This will allow your pupils to develop their basic pBuzz technique ready for starting on the main units.

Resource Checklist

- pBuzzes
- Learn to Play pBuzz powerpoint file (available in our online resources area)
- Make sure you watch the 'Making a Buzz' videos first!

Learning Objective & Outcomes

Learning Objective:

To develop basic pBuzz technique

Learning Outcomes:

- I can make a buzz
- I can breathe correctly
- I can tongue on my pBuzz
- I can change note on my pBuzz

National Curriculum Coverage:

Play tuned [and untuned] instruments musically

Session 1: What is a pBuzz?

Display slide 2 of the 'Learn to Play pBuzz' powerpoint. Hand out the pBuzzes to the children and let them explore the instrument.

Key Questions:

- How many different parts are there?
- What do you think these parts might be called?
- Do any of the parts move?
- How do you think you make a sound with it?
- What do you think the numbers, colours, and letters are for?

Show slide 3 and ask the children to find the hand position on the instrument. Some children will be confused between their left and right hands, particularly because the left hand goes at the top of the instrument, which may feel strange. If this is the case, play some games with the class to identify left and right, for example, marching in a circle, putting the correct hand up in response to a call of 'left' or 'right', or passing your pBuzz round the circle to the left and then changing direction again to the right.

Explain to the children that they have to stand up straight to play the pBuzz, and that it should be held at a slight downward angle. Practise this by holding the pBuzz at a horizontal line from your lips, and then dipping the bell slightly so that it is at a downward angle.

Explain to the children that although the pBuzz is a robust instrument and made of plastic, we still need to take really good care of it. We also need to take care of our mouthpieces, as we each want to keep our own mouthpiece rather than sharing. Explain to the children how you are going to store the pBuzzes and ensure that they get the same mouthpiece each week (for example, they could keep their mouthpiece in their drawer, or the instruments could be labeled with their name.)

Tomorrow we are going to learn to play the pBuzz! (The lack of playing in this session is deliberate, to build up the excitement!)

Session 2: How to make a Buzz

Explain to the children that you don't just blow down this instrument you have to make a 'buzz' with your lips. That's why the instrument is called a pBuzz!

Ask the children to put a finger up in front of their mouth and blow as though blowing out a candle - without puffing their cheeks out. Can they feel the air on their finger? Now ask them to lick their lips and blow again with their lips pressed together. Are they making a buzz? Can they feel their lips vibrating? Make sure they are not using their voices to hum the sound and not puffing out their cheeks!

Ask the children to take just their mouthpieces, and put them on their lips, in the centre. Remember that when they hold their pBuzz it will be pointing down slightly, so they should angle the mouthpiece down slightly now. Try to make the buzz sound again, through the mouthpiece.

Display Slide 4 of the 'Learn to play the pBuzz' PowerPoint, and sing and buzz along to the song 'I'm a little bee.'

Display Slide 5 of the PowerPoint, and sing and play along to the song 'I'm a little duck.'

Tomorrow we are going to work on our breathing, to make our buzzing sound even better.

Differentiation:

There are several alternative methods of making a buzz, for which we have provided several teacher support videos. You should watch these videos before you teach this lesson so that you can use the alternative techniques to help any children who are struggling to make a sound.

Session 3: How to Breathe

Ask the children to stand tall, but with their shoulders relaxed. Ask them to put their hands on their tummies, and imagine that they are filling them up with air as they breathe in. Tell them not to lift their shoulders up as they breathe, but instead imagine that the air is hitting the bottom of their lungs first and then slowly rising up to the top, like when we fill a glass with water. The water hits the bottom first and then gradually gets higher, it doesn't fill up the top of the glass and then the bottom!

Next, ask the children to take another deep breath in, and this time to hiss out for as long as they can. When they run out of hiss, they should sit down, and the last one standing is the winner! (Be prepared to watch out for cheating in this activity! It is almost irresistible to sneak an extra breath!)

Explain to the children that when we play our pBuzz we need to breathe out a steady stream of air like we did when we hissed. Ask them to put their mouthpieces to their mouths like yesterday, take a deep breath, and buzz for as long as they can. Again, sit down when you run out of breath – is there a different winner this time?

We're now really good at doing a big long buzz, and tomorrow we're going to learn how to do lots of short buzzes!

Session 4: How to Tongue

Explain to the children that so far they have been making just one long sound on the pBuzz. They are now going to learn how to make lots of shorter sounds using a technique called 'tonguing.' This is when we put a 't' sound at the beginning of every note.

Practise saying 'too too too too too' and feel where the 't' sound is in your mouth, right behind your teeth. Then ask the children to try buzzing on their mouthpiece, putting a 't' sound in front of each note.

Put the mouthpieces into the pBuzzes. Display Slide 7 of the 'Learn to Play the pBuzz' PowerPoint, and play along to the track on note F, with the slide fully extended. Remember to tongue each note.

If you are confident to do so, you can also use the track on Slide 6 for a call and response. This is where you make up a rhythm on the pBuzz and the children copy it back. Don't forget to tongue!

Session 5: How to Change Note

Explain to the children that up until now you have only played one note on the pBuzz, note F with the slide all the way out. How do you think we can get a different note on the pBuzz? That's right, we move the slide. As the notes go higher in pitch, tighten the corners of your mouth and blow a bit harder to make your lips vibrate faster.

Give the children some time to experiment in pairs, moving the slide to a different position and seeing if they can change note. Don't worry too much if some of them don't seem able to get the different notes – we are going to be adding one note per half term throughout Year One, so it will be ages before they need to be able to play all the notes!

Troubleshooting Tips:

- Move the slide around slightly within each coloured band to see how that affects the pitch of each note
- Check that you are breathing correctly, releasing a steady column of air
- Check your lip shape to see if you are buzzing correctly

Remind the children that they need to tongue at the start of the note, and also take a deep breath and release their air steadily through the pBuzz to make a good sound. Can anyone guess how we can play louder or quieter? That's right, we can blow harder, or softer.

Assessment & Evaluation

What to look for:

Children can make a buzz
 Children can take a deep breath correctly
 Children can let their breath out in a steady flow
 Children can tongue on and off the mouthpiece
 Children understand how to change note

How will you know if the lesson has been successful?

Can all the children make a buzz on the mouthpiece?
 Can all the children take a deep breath in?
 Can most of the children let their breath out in a steady flow?
 Can all the children tongue on and off the mouthpiece?
 Do all the children understand how to change note?
 Can some children change note when they play?

Notes for Next Time

This space is for you to reflect on the unit and make any notes you need.

