Engaging and FUNdamental Activities: 
Bridging the Gap Between 
Elementary and Middle School Choir

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Songs

The Boll Weevil

Traditional American

1. The boll weevil is a little black bug from Mexico they say. Came
2. The first time I seen a boll weevil, He was sitting on a square, next
3. Then the farmer took the boll weevil, and put him in the hot sand, Boll

all the way to Texas. He was looking for a place to stay. Just a lookin' for a

4. Then the farmer took the boll weevil, Put him on the ice,
And the boll weevil said to the farmer, "I'll be mighty cool and nice,
It'll be my home,
It'll be my home."

5. Well the farmer said to his wife, "Honey, what do you think about that?
The old boll weevil done made a nest In my brand new Stetson hat
And it's full of holes, It's full of holes."

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1. Singing Tunefully

Resources For Developing In-tune Singing


2. How to Select Repertoire

Consider following these criteria when selecting choral materials.

- Is the material of good quality? If you are unsure as to how to select quality material, familiarize yourself with the works of recognized composers for children’s choirs. Begin to analyze and sing some of the choral compositions of Kodály. It will become apparent how his style of composition and his folksong arrangements provide excellent models for composing children’s choral works.
- Select all types of repertoire for your choir, including the Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Modern eras of composition.
- Will the students enjoy singing the text of the choral piece? The text should be meaningful to them.
- Is the vocal line for each voice part interesting for them to sing?
- Does the range of the song work for your students?
- Is this an easy, challenging, or difficult piece for the choir? Look at the melodic turns, rhythms, harmony, voice leading, and modulation. Avoid simplified scores, or repertoire that has been simplified for children’s choir.
- How difficult is the part singing?
- What role does the piano accompaniment play in the performance?

**Phase One: The Cognitive Phase**

**Preparation**

Stage 1) **Internalizing Music through Kinesthetic Activities.** Developing Kinesthetic Awareness

Students listen to the instructor sing the new song.
Students perform the new song with movement.
Rationale: To match patterns of experience to patterns of music.

Stage 2) **Describe what you hear.** Developing Aural Awareness by Responding to Questions

Students aurally analyze the characteristics of the new musical element with the help of the instructor.
Students describe the characteristics of the new element
Rationale: To verbalize what they perceive.

Stage 3) **Constructing a Representation from Memory:** Developing Visual Awareness

Students create a visual representation based on their aural understanding.
Rationale: To visually represent what they have heard and verbalized.

**Phase Two: The Associative Phase**

**Presentation**

Stage 1) **Associate the sound** of the new element with solfège or rhythmic syllables.
Stage 2) **Associate traditional notation** with the sound of the new musical element.

**Phase Three: Assimilative Phase**

**Practice**

Stage 1) **Students aurally practice** the new element in familiar and new songs.
Stage 2) **Students visually practice** the new element in familiar and new songs.
4. Repertoire for Developing Part Work and Music Literacy


5. Sample teaching strategy

Teaching Strategy from Houlahan and Tacka *Kodály in the Fifth Grade Classroom* pages 73-81

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Focus Song</th>
<th>Present Syllables</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Traditional Notation</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Additional Songs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>si</td>
<td>si is a minor second below l</td>
<td>Ah Poor Bird</td>
<td>si</td>
<td>Harmonic minor scale; augmented second</td>
<td>Even subdivisions of a beat in 6/8 meter</td>
<td>Go Down, Moses, Vine and Fig Tree, Dors Dors, ‘tit Bébé Soon I will be Done. Art Songs: Brahms,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cognitive Phase: Preparation

Internalize Music Through Kinesthetic Activities
1. Sing *Ah, Poor Bird* and point to a representation of the melodic contour at the board.

Describe What You Hear
1. Review the Kinesthetic activities with the focus song *Ah, Poor Bird*.
2. Determine the lowest and highest notes.
3. T “Andy, sing the lowest note of the song.” (*l*)
4. T “Andy, sing the highest note of the song.” (*l*)
5. Determine the known solfège syllables for the third phrase:
   T “Andy, what solfège syllable begins on beat one phrase three?” (*m*)
   T “Andy, what are the solfège syllable for beat three and four?” (*l m m r*)
   T “Andy, what is the first solfège syllable for beat two?” (*l*)
   T Sing the phrase with solfège syllables and hums the new note.
6. Students discover that the new note is a minor second below *l*.

Create a Visual Representation of What You Hear
1. Assess kinesthetic and aural awareness by allowing the class to perform several of the kinesthetic and aural awareness activities.
2. The instructor hums the target phrase with a neutral syllable and asks students to create a visual representation of the melody of the target phrase. Students may use manipulatives. T “Pick up what you need to recreate what you heard.” Or “Draw what you heard.” T assesses students’ level of understanding.
3. Students share their representations with each other.
4. The instructor invites one student to the board to share their representation with the class. If necessary corrections to the representation can be made by reviewing the aural awareness questions.
5. Students circle all half steps in their representations
6. Students sing *Ah Poor Bird* with a neutral syllable and point to their representation.
7. Sing *Ah Poor Bird*

Create a Representation of the scale
1. S create a visual representation of the scale
2. S identify the interval between the notes as major or minor seconds
**Associative Phase: Presentation**

**Describe What You Hear With Solfège Syllables**

1. Assess the kinesthetic and aural awareness and visual awareness activities with the focus song *Ah, Poor Bird*.
2. Teacher presents the name and high sign for the new note. (The hand sign for si is most often showed with fingers slightly spread).

3. Teacher sings the third phrase with solfège syllables and handsigns. Students echo sing with solfège and handsigns.
4. Teachers hums phrases on loo and students echo sing with solfège and handsigns.
5. Teacher hums the notes of the harmonic minor scale. Students identify the notes of the scale with solfège syllables. Teacher presents the name of the scale as harmonic minor scale.
6. Teacher identifies the new interval, fa-si, as an augmented second.

**Notate What You Hear**

1. Present the melody with traditional rhythmic notation

   \[
   \frac{4}{4} \quad \begin{array}{ccccccccccc}
   \text{l,} & \text{t,} & \text{d} & \text{d} & \text{r} & \text{m} & \text{m} & \text{l} & \text{si} & \text{l} & \text{m} & \text{r} & \text{d} & \text{t,} & \text{l,}
   \end{array}
   \]

2. Review the rule of placement for si on the staff
3. Present the melody on a staff
4. Present *Ah, Poor Bird* in staff notation.

   \[
   \begin{array}{ccccccccccc}
   \text{Ah, Poor Bird}
   \end{array}
   \]

5. Naming the scale:
   a. Present the pattern for the harmonic minor scale on the steps
      Present the harmonic minor scale in staff notation and present the rule of placement.

   \[
   \begin{array}{ccccccccccc}
   \text{Ah, Poor Bird}
   \end{array}
   \]

6. Present scale degree numbers for the harmonic minor scales
7. Present the notation of the scale on the staff
8. Identify the augmented second interval and the major seventh interval.

**Assimilative Phrase: Practice Music Skills**

**Aural Practice:**

**Singing with syllables**

1. **Teacher** sings phrases of *Ah, Poor Bird* and students echo solfège syllables
2. **Students** sing *Ah, Poor Bird* on solfège syllables in canon with T and in small groups
3. T sings motifs from known songs and students sing back with solfège syllables and hand signs
4. T sings minor and majors scales and S sing back with solfège and hand signs.

**Singing Intervals**
1. *T* sings the intervals between the notes of the tone set, *S* sings the intervals identifies whether it is a skip or a step.

2. *T* sings the intervals between the tonic note and notes of the tone set, *S* sings the intervals identifies intervals.

3. *T* plays intervals on the piano melodically or harmonically and student identifies the solfège and the interval name.

**Part Work**

1. Use the target phrase as an ostinato.
2. *S* echo sing four beat patterns provided by the teacher with solfège and hand signs but begin singing at beat three of the teacher's pattern.
3. Combine a phrase as an ostinato as well as another motif from the song so that you are using two ostinatos at the same time. This works with pentatonic music.
4. Students sing a minor song and teacher accompanies with a drone made of up *l*, or *l*-*m* played on an instrument.
5. Students sing a minor and teacher accompanies with the solfège syllables *l* or *m*.

**Improvisation**

1. *T* sings a music questions with solfège syllables and hand signs and *S* provide an answer. Question ends on *m* and after several activities end on *t*. Answer ends on *l*.
2. *S* sings a music questions with solfège syllables and hand signs and another *S* provide an answer.
3. *S* improvises a four beat pattern. The next student begins their 4 beat improvisation with the last two beats of the first student.
4. *S* transform a *do* scale into a *la* scale.
5. *S* transform a *la* melody in to a *do* melody.

The following is taken from Chapter 9 Houlahan & Tacka (2015) *Kodály Today: A Cognitive Approach to Music Education*

**6. How to Develop Part Singing Skills**

*The following is a sequence for developing part singing:*

- Keeping a Beat and Demonstrating Music Comparatives
- Call-and-Response or Antiphonal Singing
- Pointing to a Beat
- Clapping the Rhythm
- Tapping on Specified Beat
- Singing the Final Note of a Composition
- Finding the Tonic Note of a Composition
- Creating Organ Points on a Specified Beat
- Rhythmic Ostinato
- Performing Rhythm Canons Based on Simple Rhythms
- Performing a Kinesthetic Canon
- Performing an Aural Rhythm Canon with Rhythm Syllables
- Performing Simple Canons Based on Rhythms of Simple Folksongs
- Drones
- Melodic Ostinato
- Combining Drones and Melodic Ostinatos
• Three-Part Singing
• Discovering an Ostinato as the Students Sing a Known Song
• Discovering an Ostinato as the Students Sight-Read a Song
• Two-Part Hand Sign Singing (Note Against Note)
• Singing Simple Melodies as Canons with Text
• All pentatonic songs may be sung in canon. Choose simple folksongs.
• Partner Songs
• Singing a Known Song and Clapping Rhythmic Motives as an Accompaniment
• Singing and Tapping a Known Pentatonic Melody
• Singing Simple Pentatonic Melodies as Canons With Solfège Syllables
• Sight Singing and Clapping in Canon
• Singing Pentatonic Scales in Canon
• Singing a Pentatonic Melody While Singing Pentatonic Scales in Canon
• Singing Simple Pentatonic Folk Songs in Three Parts
• Sing Simple Pentatonic Melodic Motives and Melodies in Canon at the Octave, Fourth, and the Fifth with Solfège Syllables

7. How to Teach Simple Two-Part Song Arrangements
When teaching students to sing in two parts, build on their prior knowledge. It is a good idea to select two-part arrangements where students already know the melody; now they will be learning an arrangement of the folksong. Many of these folksongs can include some or all of these compositional techniques.

1. A rhythmic or melodic ostinato to accompany the folksong
2. Including a tonic, or tonic and dominant drone that may be sung as an accompaniment
3. The melody line to be shared between the upper and lower voices
4. Songs including imitation

   Teaching a Second Part to a Known Song by Rote
Students should already be able to sing songs with rhythmic and melodic ostinato as well as sing songs in canon before learning simple two-part songs. Here is a suggested teaching procedure for teaching a two-part song arrangement.
• T sings the unfamiliar part or harmony while playing the melody on the piano or performing with one S.
• T asks Ss questions based on the performance of the song:
  a. “How many phrases are there in this arrangement?”
  b. “Did the two parts begin and end each phrase together?”
  c. “Did both parts have the same text?”
  d. “How would you describe the tune of the harmony line?”
  e. “Did both parts begin and end on the same pitch?”
• T sings the harmony line phrase by phrase and Ss repeat. This can be done with rhythm or solfège syllables or on a neutral syllable if Ss have not learned all the solfège or rhythm syllables. It is easiest when done with text. T performs the melody on the piano for each phrase as Ss learn the harmony line phrase by
- Ss and T sing the harmony line while T plays the melody line on the piano.
- Ss sing the harmony line while T sings the melody line. Switch parts.
- T divides the class into two groups. Group A sings the harmony and group B sings the melody. Switch parts.

8. Resources for your rehearsal.
You will find several chapters in this book on teaching musicianship skills in the upper grades as well as applying the Kodály Concept to the choral rehearsal:

The following books contain detailed lessons for teaching diatonic major, minor, modal, simple and compound meters and rhythms:

The following books provide materials as well as teaching process for developing singing skills with an emphasis and the development of audition skills

The follow books are excellent for teaching sight singing skills based on folk music repertoire.


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https://www.facebook.com/groups/1469799603314646/

Secondary: Houlahan&Tacak& Kodaly Studies.
https://www.facebook.com/groups/256828061364793/
Lesson Plan for teaching the Harmonic Minor Scale from Houlahan and Tacka *Kodály in the Fifth Grade Classroom* pages 254-256

### Grade 5: Unit 6 Si the Harmonic Minor Scale Lesson 1

| Outcome | Preparation: Internalizing si through kinesthetic activities  
Practice: Reading simple rhythms in compound meter |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
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</table>
| **Warm Up** | T selects a piece of contemporary popular music for movement  
• Body Warm Up  
• Beat Activity  
• Breathing: Students practice breathing exercises  
• Resonance: Imitate the sound of a siren with the voice. Challenge the children to make soft and loud, high and low, long and short sirens, sirens that just go up, just come down, or do both.  
• Posture: Remind students about the correct posture to sing sitting and or standing |
| **Sing Known Songs** | *Boots of Shining Leather* CSP: D  
• Sing song with text  
• Sing song in canon  
*Rose Rose* CSP: G  
• Sing song with text  
• Sing song in canon |
| **Develop Tuneful Singing** | *Go Down, Moses* CSP: D  
• Sing song  
• Sing on different vowels and use voiced and unvoiced consonants  
• review target vowels [i] [e] [a] [o] [u] |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diction</th>
<th>• Kodály Choral Library <em>Let Us Sing Correctly</em>: No. 87</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressions</td>
<td><em>Review Known Songs and Elements</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>To Work Upon the Railway CSP: A</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• S sing song and conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• S sing song with solfège syllables and hand signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• T sings phrases on loo and S echo sings with solfège syllables and hand signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• T may choose to sing phrases of <em>Ghost of Tom; Dona, Dona, Dona; Drill Ye Tarriers; To Work Upon the Railway; Sweet William; Hashivenu; Come to the Land; Tumbalalaika, Rise Up O Flame, Shalom Chaverim</em> Art Music Beethoven Mister Urian (<em>Reise um die Welt</em>) op 52 No. 1 and/or other known songs that use known that use the solfège syllables l, t, d r m f s l; S echo sing using with solfège syllables and hand signs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CORE ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teach a New Song</strong></td>
<td><em>Come Let's Dance CSP: C</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• T sings song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• T hums and students follow in canon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• T and S sing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Develop Knowledge of Music Concepts</strong></td>
<td><em>Ah, Poor Bird CSP: D</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sing <em>Ah, Poor Bird</em> and point to a representation of the melodic contour at the board.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sing <em>Ah, Poor Bird</em> with rhythm syllables and show the melodic contour while clapping the rhythm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sing in canon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internalize Music Through Kinesthetic Activities</strong></td>
<td><em>I's the By CSP: A</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sing song</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Compose a rhythmic ostinato for percussion instrument</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Compose a melodic ostinato for a pitched instrument</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create a new game movement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Create a new text</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creative Movement</strong></td>
<td><em>Row Your Boat CSP: D</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sing song</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sing <em>Row, Row, Row your Boat</em> with rhythm syllables and keep the beat</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Sing <em>Row, Row, Row your Boat</em> with rhythm syllables and conduct</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Determine the meter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Read <em>Row, Row, Row Your Boat</em> in traditional rhythmic notation with rhythm syllables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Read <em>Row, Row, Row Your Boat</em> notated on staff with rhythm syllables and solfège syllables.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Read the notation for the following and listen to a recording <em>The Wild Rider</em>, Op. 68 No. 8, from Album from the Young by Robert Schumann (1810-1856)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Review Lesson Outcomes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Review the New Song</td>
<td><em>Come Let’s Dance CSP: C</em></td>
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</table>

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