

FAST OR SLOW MEANS TEMPO

LESSON PLANS

CLASS NOTES®

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FAST OR SLOW MEANS TEMPO

LESSON/ACTIVITY PLAN

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

This Curriculum Guide is designed to prepare, reinforce, and extend learning concepts and ideas from the MPR Class Notes video Fast or Slow Means Tempo.

These standards-based activities are intended to engage students through active music learning. We hope you will personalize, modify or adjust content to meet the needs of your unique classroom.

Fast or Slow Means Tempo covers or touches upon a number of fundamental music concepts. For this curriculum, we will focus on three concepts or ideas to enhance and deepen student learning:

1. Definition of tempo.
2. Recognition, identification, and demonstration of at least three tempo markings, including but not limited to:
 - › Lento
 - › Moderato
 - › Presto
3. Strong pulse versus unmeasured feel in music.

PREPARING TO WATCH THE VIDEO

Just as literacy teachers use pre-reading strategies, music teachers can use pre-listening/prewatching strategies. This helps students create a mental framework to organize new ideas, relate content to prior knowledge, and make connections. What you bring to a listening experience will affect what you hear and take away from that experience.

- PRE-LISTENING/WATCHING STRATEGIES
 1. Preview vocabulary. Here's a list of music vocabulary contained in the video or related to the video content.
 - › Tempo
 - › Time Signature
 - › Tempo marking
 - › Lento
 - › Largo
 - › Moderato
 - › Andante
 - › Allegretto
 - › Allegro
 - › Vivace
 - › Presto




2. Listen to music with a wide variety of tempi. Select a handful of tempo markings to define, learn, and memorize. Try to guess the tempo marking for each selection. Listed below are some suggested pieces. Find audio for each of the pieces on the [Class Notes: Fast or Slow Means Tempo Lesson Plan Audio](#) page.

- › *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* by John Adams
- › The sublime *Serenade for Winds, K. 361, 3rd movement*, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- › *O Polichinelo* by Heitor Villa-Lobos'
- › Famous tempo manipulator *Glenn Gould slowly playing some J.S. Bach*
- › *Oblivion* by Astor Piazzolla

3. Create a tempo spectrum chart. Create index cards with tempo markings for students to sort and post along the spectrum. The finished product might look like this:

SLOWEST	SLOW	SORTA SLOW	MEDIUM	SORTA FAST	FAST	SUPER DUPER FAST	
LARGO	LENTO	ADAGIO	ANDANTE	MODERATO	ALLEGRO	VIVACE	PRESTO

Add visual reinforcement by adding pictures or real-world objects. This could be done as a bulletin board on display for the whole class or as a worksheet for individual students to create.

SLOWEST	SLOW	SORTA SLOW	MEDIUM	SORTA FAST	FAST	SUPER DUPER FAST	
LARGO	LENTO	ADAGIO	ANDANTE	MODERATO	ALLEGRO	VIVACE	PRESTO
							

REFORCE IDEAS AND CONCEPTS FROM THE VIDEO THROUGH ACTIVE LEARNING

1. Use your bodies! There is no better way to internalize tempo than feeling it “in your bones.” Move to music in your classroom often and in creative ways. Here are two specific activities that develop awareness of tempo through kinesthetic learning:

TEMPO OLYMPICS

Create a set of tempo flash cards. Begin with just three: *lento*, *moderato* and *presto*. These represent the slow, middle and fast end of the spectrum.



Select a physical activity, such as push-ups or jumping jacks. Ask for a volunteer to be the Olympic athlete. Flash a card and tell them they must perform the designated activity at that tempo. Flash a new card, vary the activity, and have students create their own cards and partner up. You may also decide to improvise on a keyboard to provide a soundtrack for these activities, or have a number of sound files lined up and use recorded music.

BEAT MACHINE/WET NOODLE

Find a piece of music that alternates between having a steady pulse and a free flowing, unmeasured feel. Listen to Bartok’s “Evening in Transylvania” from *Ten Easy Pieces, Sz. 39*. Find the audio on the [Class Notes: Fast or Slow Means Tempo Lesson Plan Audio](#) page.

The rhythm alternates between free-flowing and very metered and pulse-driven. While listening, ask students to be a beat machine on the pulsing sections and get limp like a noodle on the parts that sound unmeasured. This is also a good way to teach form (AABAB in this case) You might also ask students to keep a steady beat on a classroom instrument such as a wood block during the pulsing parts alternating with a bell tree or wind chimes in the free flowing sections. Find other pieces to repeat this activity.

2. Integrate language into everyday activities, transitions, and classroom routines. When cleaning up after playing classroom instruments, tell students they have ten *lento* counts to put their materials away. Count with an exaggerated, slow voice. Reinforce counting with a hand drum or tambourine.

EXTEND LEARNING WITH PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Select a couple of contrasting movements from Camille Saint-Saëns's *Carnival of the Animals*. "Tortoises" and "The Elephant" are quite slow, while "Finale" is fast. The tempo marking and BPM for "Aviary" aren't really very fast, but the overall effect conveys rapid movement because of the note values of the flute part.

Time permitting, make a listening chart and with each movement in a box. Include a box in which to guess the tempo. See the next page for a sample worksheet (with answer key.) Please use it as is or customize it for your own unique needs. Saint-Saëns uses common tempo markings like *allegro* and *moderato*, but often includes further descriptive words like *pomposo* and *ridicolo*. Perhaps you will Google these words or simply guess what they mean, based on the mood of the piece. This is a good opportunity to ask students about the composer's intentions.

Extend learning further by categorizing the movements into two groups: pieces with an obvious-steady beat and those which feel unmetered or more free-flowing. "People with Long Ears" and "Kangaroos" are good examples of the latter kind of piece. Here is a chance to learn or review terms like *accelerando* and *ritardando*.

Ask students to look at the score and find as many of these words as they can. Search for a copy of the full score [here](#). Audio for Carnival of the Animals is on the [Class Notes: Fast or Slow Means Tempo Lesson Plan Audio](#) page.

Carnival of the Animals	
MOVEMENT TITLE	TEMPO MARKING
ROYAL MARCH OF THE LIONS	
HENS AND COCKERELS	
WILD DONKEYS	
TORTOISES	
THE ELEPHANT	
KANGAROOS	
AQUARIUM	
PEOPLE WITH LONG EARS	
THE CUCKOO IN THE DEPTHS OF THE WOODS	
AVIARY	
PIANISTS	
FOSSILS	
THE SWAN	
FINALE	

Here's a version with the correct answers for an answer key.

Carnival of the Animals	
MOVEMENT TITLE	TEMPO MARKING
ROYAL MARCH OF THE LIONS	<i>Andante Maestoso/Allegro non troppo</i>
HENS AND COCKERELS	<i>Allegro Moderato</i>
WILD DONKEYS	<i>Presto Furioso</i>
TORTOISES	<i>Andante Maestoso</i>
THE ELEPHANT	<i>Allegretto pomposo</i>
KANGAROOS	<i>Moderato, with constant accel. and rit.</i>
AQUARIUM	<i>Andantino</i>
PEOPLE WITH LONG EARS	<i>Tempo ad lib.</i>
THE CUCKOO IN THE DEPTHS OF THE WOODS	<i>Andante</i>
AVIARY	<i>Moderato grazioso</i>
PIANISTS	<i>Allegro moderato</i>
FOSSILS	<i>Allegro ridicolo</i>
THE SWAN	<i>Andantino grazioso</i>
FINALE	<i>Molto Allegro</i>

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can follow the teacher to start, stop and stay together through a musical piece.
- I can perform music by responding to musical terms.
- I can identify musical elements when listening and interacting with a wide variety of music.

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PRINT PAGES

CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS CHART

Carnival of the Animals	
MOVEMENT TITLE	TEMPO MARKING
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HENS AND COCKERELS	
WILD DONKEYS	
TORTOISES	
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THE CUCKOO IN THE DEPTHS OF THE WOODS	
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