

Primary School Music At-Home Challenge

Materials needed:

Paper and pencil

A phone or computer that records audio

Step 1.

Write one sentence answering the question:

What's the first thing you want to tell your friends about this break?

Step 2.

Read your response aloud five or six times. Take note of the natural rhythm of the words. Note where your voice rises and falls on certain words.

Say that sentence again and exaggerate the natural rhythm and pitches.

Try singing your sentence.

Think about these tips to help you craft your melody:

- Remember that a melody should be something you can teach someone else to sing. Choose pitches that are catchy and easy to remember. Repeating pitches is okay!
- Are there words you want to emphasize? If so, how could you show emphasis with rhythm? How could you show emphasis with pitches?
- If your sentence is short, try repeating it—or repeat some of the important words. You could also stretch out words.

Keep working at it until your melody is at least ten seconds long. (It might be helpful to rewrite your sentence with notes for yourself, especially if you are repeating words.)

Using a phone or computer, record yourself singing this new message melody.

Listen back and consider how you might want to continue to refine your melody:

- How might you expand or shrink the range of pitches to better suit the feeling?
- Think about the message you want to communicate. What is the tone of your message? Excited, Nervous? Joyful? Annoyed? How can your melody also reflect the mood of your message?

- How could you change the rhythms to add greater interest?
- How could you add moments of silence into your melody?

Record a final version that you can share with friends when you return to school.

Going Further

Look for different objects around your house that could safely become instruments, or use your own instrument. Make sure to ask an adult for permission to use any found objects or ask them to explore with you!

Play back your sung melody and add different accompaniments using your instrument. Remember, you can also use your voice or body percussion, too. Read through the six challenges below. Choose two or three that you are interested in using to create variations.

- Create a variation that builds in intensity.
- Create a variation that feels relaxed.
- Create one that goes from simple to complex.
- Create one that incorporates silence.
- Compose a rhythmic ostinato that persists throughout your melody.
- Create a variation that includes a surprise.

Give each variation a name to help you remember your compositional choices.

Step 3.

Review your two or three variations and decide on an order in which you could perform them:

- Which one seems like a good one to begin with?
- What might be a good way to end? How can you transition from the beginning to the end using the other variations?

Perform your final version for someone at home