

What is a Dulcimer?

Activity Ideas and Lesson Plans

PLAY A DULCIMER - on a tablet computer

Download and have a go at playing a tune on a dulcimer on a tablet computer. There are quite a few apps which simulate playing the dulcimer or one of the international cousins, the two below are alternatives for the English standard hammered dulcimer and we have given you some information to help you choose which you prefer.

Trapezoid (iOS/79p)

Trapezoid has the layout of a realistic instrument, and it has a nice sound, but no recording facility.

Dulcimer HD (iOS/£1.49)

You can use Dulcimer HD to play back songs (some programmed in). The instrument shown has less notes than Trapezoid, and it's an octave higher (so it doesn't sound as realistic). If you don't want recording then Trapezoid is better.

Activity 1: Play a scale. eg. CDEF - GABC (start on a marked note, go up to the next marker then repeat on the left of this pattern on the other bridge). The hammered dulcimer is arranged in scales. The markers help to pick these out.

Activity 2: Play London's Burning starting on D4 or Twinkle Twinkle Little Star starting on G4.

DULCIMER TIMELINE

Read about and discuss the history of the dulcimer with students and then add the dates to your class timeline which might also include other historical events you have explored in other lessons.

DULCIMER MUSIC WORKSHOP

The Nonsuch Dulcimer Club has members all over the UK who can be booked to run workshops or hold demonstrations of both hammered and Appalachian dulcimers to enable students to learn about the music, history and have a go at this unusual instrument. The Nonsuch Dulcimer Club has a Child Protection Policy. Some of its members have DBS checks and teaching experience.

Contact the Nonsuch Dulcimer Club by visiting www.dulcimer.org.uk.





SOUNDTRACK TO YOUR STORY

The atmospheric sound of the dulcimer is often used to accompany film. Pick one of the video clips below and imagine the music is accompanying a different film (not the video you are looking at, so close your eyes and listen)! Imagine you are creating your own film using the dulcimer as your backing track. What is happening in your film? Write or draw a picture which describes what is happening in the film.

Soundtracks played on the Hammered Dulcimer

Sherlock Holmes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgRVJksQocM>

The Ipccress File: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2Jw6_Xgszk

Soundtracks played on the Appalachian or Mountain Dulcimer

Heart of the Dulcimer: (documentary)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuMJQn4IIFI&index=5&list=RDgZgTRIjwlc0>

STORY WRITING LESSON PLAN (BBC)

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/teachers/ks2_lessonplans/english/story_writing.shtml

