

Notating Compositions

Why notate?

Music making can be spontaneous, played from memory or played from a written form.

The Music curriculum advocates that 'children should always sing, play or listen to the sound before considering it in symbolic form' (Teacher Guidelines p 90). It goes on to state that 'the best time to introduce music notation is the moment when the child expresses a need to record his/her musical pieces or collections of sounds so that they can be recalled on another occasion'.

As children are composing they come to the realisation that they may need a way of remembering and representing their sounds. This can be done in pictures, symbols (graphic notation) and words initially, with the emphasis on finding a way to reflect what is happening (instruments being played; players; sounds being produced; order of sounds etc).

As their experience grows children come to use standard notation. The Teacher Guidelines (p92) state that 'Standard notation need not replace graphic notation but rather can be introduced to complement graphic notation'. Children use a combination of both methods.

P 91 of the Music-Teacher Guidelines offers some examples of representing concepts.

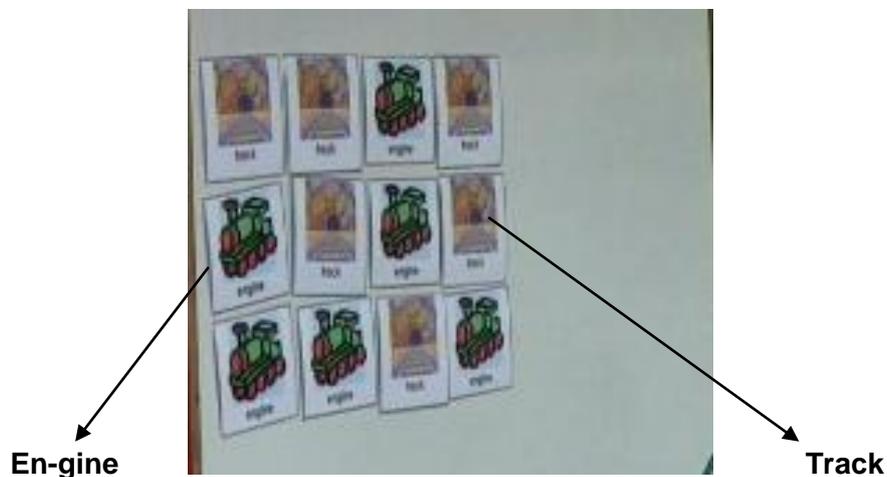
See also PPDS website: examples of graphic scores

Some other suggestions and samples are illustrated below:

Pictorial Scores:

1. Trains:

Using the theme of trains, choose words with different numbers of syllables. Show pictures of these words and use this as a pictorial score



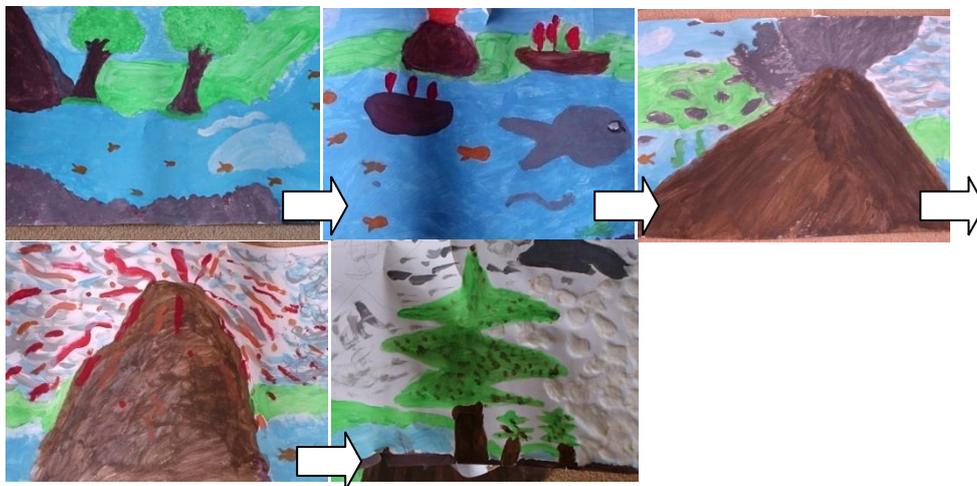
Add in pictures of words with three and four syllable eg. **pass-en-gers**; **lo-co-mo-tive**.

Children can play the rhythm sequences created by the line of pictures, using body percussion or instruments. They experiment with different sequences and rhythm patterns.

See also PPDS website: [Video Clip: 'Composing with Seniors' \(Full lesson on using the theme of trains for composition\)](#)

2. Travelling/Going on a Journey

Here is the score for the story of the 'Intrepid Traveller' as he travelled by river, encountered other boats, listened to the volcano erupting and finished his journey in surrounded by snow and ice. Children created the paintings for the score and their composition was played as the traveller went on his journey.



3. By the Sea

Alternatively, choose words that relate to the sea. Record the words or the pictures of same.

Clap the syllables of the words

Sail-ing boat	Sea-weed	sun	Light-house
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Arrange the words in an order for playing (rhythm pattern)

sun	sun	Sail-ing boat	sun
Sea-weed	Sail-ing boat	Sail-ing boat	sun
Sail-ing boat	Light-house	sun	Light-house
sun	sun	Sail-ing boat	sun

Use pictures, words, phrases to create a rhythm pattern:



tur-tle



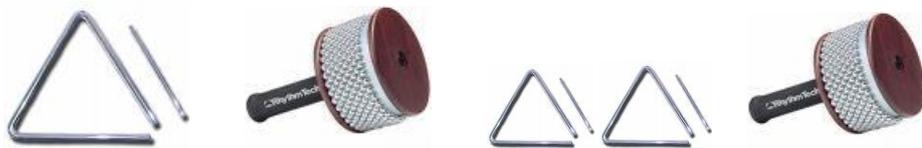
see the sails



On the is-land

4. Use pictures of instruments (play in order they are arranged)

(Eg. A)



(Eg. B)



START

FINISH



Beginning Graphic representation:

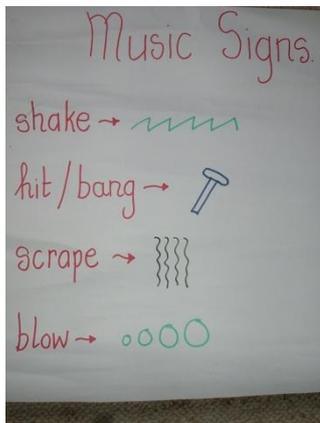
1. The Eerie Castle:

Scary sound 1	Scary sound 1	Scary sound 1	Scary sound 1
Scary sound 2		Scary sound 2	
Cr e E E E eeeeeeeeeeeeek	SH SH SH SH SH SH SH	Cr e E E E eeeeeeeeeeeeek	SSSSSHHHH
Long trembly sounds..... BOO!			
<p>Footsteps</p> 			

2. Use graphic symbols

..... . .		OOO SH! Zzzzzzzz	
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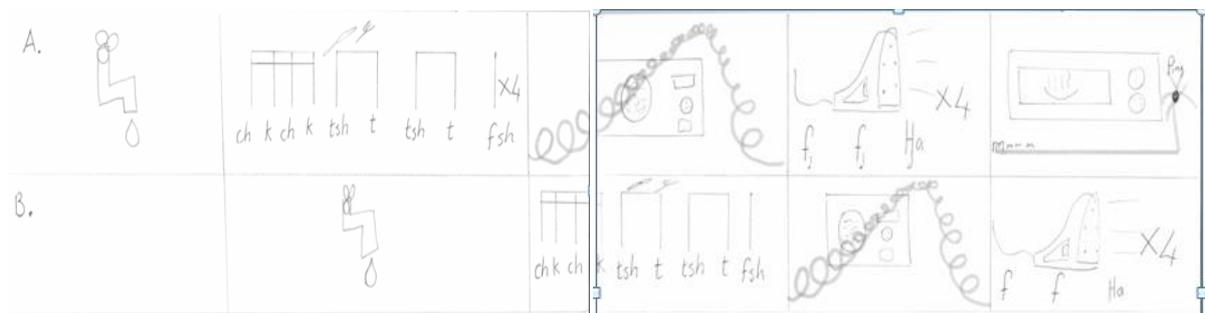
Children may use agreed symbols across the class, for example:



Introducing Standard Notation:

Stage One: Graphic and Standard-

Eg 1: kitchen sounds pictures



including sounds from tap cutlery microwave iron

1st TURO (CLAIRE) once up and down *P*
 2nd Wind blowing (windpipes) Meave two
 wood blocks together *Hollie 4*
 3rd Foot steps (Crunching paper)
 4th Recorder (Sinead) *andante*
 E F G E / A A B A / A G A D /
 E F G E C - / F
 All instruments together

Eg 2 Winter scores:

including wind, footsteps on snow, rain melody

Using Standard Notation:

Eg 1 Mystery

Emer: C E F A
 Louisa: B A G Z
 Ally: E G E F
 Emma: E G B C

Eg 2 Classroom sounds

sh: [Rhythmic notation]
 cups: [Rhythmic notation]
 pencil case: [Rhythmic notation]
 teacher: Journal, Quiet please..., homework, start!, Objections!, homework!, start!, Quiet please..., homework
 helicopter 1: Mmmmm...
 helicopter 2: [Rhythmic notation]