

# Global Music Lesson Plans

## Lesson 2: Bringing the Rain to the Kapiti Plain – Kenya

**Age range: 5–7**

**Time required:**

Two or three lessons of 40 minutes.

**Activity:**

Exploring how sounds can be used to describe events in the Kenyan story, ‘Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain’.

**Aims:**

To introduce the idea that sounds and music can be used descriptively to accompany a story. To create a class composition, combining layers of sound within simple structures.

**Pupils will learn:**

- About the musical elements of timbre, tempo, duration and dynamics while composing sound effects to accompany a story.
- How to experiment with voices and sound makers in order to find appropriate effects.
- About the impact of water shortage in drought-affected countries.

**Web links you will need:** None

**Other resources you will need:**

- The Kenyan story ‘Bringing the Rain to the Kapiti Plain’ by Aerna Aardema (published by Macmillan Children’s Books: ISBN 0-333-35164-9). You can find this book at various online stores.
- **Lyric sheet** for the South African chant: ‘Where is the Rain?’ (below).
- Interactive whiteboard with internet access.
- Unpitched and pitched percussion instruments and sound makers e.g. tin foil, grease-proof paper, bubble wrap etc. Note: wherever possible, use authentic African percussion instruments e.g. drums, shakers, bells.

Useful Information
<p>Drought and the changing rainfall patterns of the world are:</p> <p>a) Aspects of the climate and</p> <p>b) Indicators of climactic change which impact on all of our lives.</p> <p>During the summer of 2006 many water companies imposed water restrictions and hose pipe bans across the UK, bringing home to everyone the value of water as a natural resource. Pupils should be made aware of the consequences of water shortages, and the more devastating environmental and human consequences of drought.</p> <p>The Kenyan story of 'Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain' is one which may help pupils to understand how precious this limited resource really is, and to empathise with people living in areas where the arrival of the rains is critical.</p>

Lesson Plan	Bringing the Rain to the Kapiti Plain – Kenya (Age range 5–7)
Starter	<p>Divide the class into two groups and rhythmically chant the following call and response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call - <i>Bringing the rain.</i></li> <li>• Response - <i>Kapiti Plain.</i></li> </ul> <p>Repeat the chant a number of times, then transfer the call and response rhythms to two groups of percussion instruments, for example: Call = drums, Response = shakers &amp; scrapers.</p>
Main	<p>Read the Kenyan story 'Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain'.</p> <p>Discuss with pupils the effects of drought and the way it impacts on the lives of people across the globe. Relate drought to the water shortages currently being experienced in the UK and the growing concerns about climactic change. Questions might include: What happens to our own landscape when there are water shortages? How does it impact on our own lives? What could we do to reduce our water consumption?</p> <p>Explain that the pupils are going to compose music that describes some, or all, of the following episodes of the story. (You may want to provide pictures to represent each episode. We have suggested possible online photos; however we cannot guarantee that the external links will continue to work and thus you may need to provide your own.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Kapiti Plain</i> (see <a href="#">image of Kenyan plain</a>).</li> <li>• <i>The black cloud</i> (see <a href="#">image of a black cloud</a>).</li> <li>• <i>Grass all brown and dead and the cows all hungry and dry</i> (see <a href="#">image of drought</a>).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kipati standing on one leg</i> (see <a href="#">image of tribesman</a>).</li> <li>• <i>The eagle who dropped a feather.</i> (See <a href="#">image of eagle</a> and <a href="#">feather</a>).</li> <li>• <i>The bow that shoots an arrow into the cloud</i> (see <a href="#">image of African archer</a>).</li> <li>• <i>Thunder, lightning and rain</i> (see <a href="#">image of storm</a>).</li> </ul> <p>Sit the pupils in a large circle with instruments in the middle. (Note: use as many authentic African instruments as possible). Include sound makers such as rain sticks, greaseproof paper, bubble wrap, tin foil etc.</p> <p>For each episode, discuss any aspects that might be described in sound, inviting pupils to match their ideas to a vocal or instrumental sound.</p> <p>Encourage pupils to shape their sounds by asking 'What if' questions e.g. 'what if you start very quietly and get gradually louder?' or 'What if you play a long sound followed by some short loud sounds?' When agreement has been reached, assign a group of pupils in the class to be responsible for some of the sounds and allocate instruments accordingly.</p> <p>Compose music for each of the descriptive episodes taken from the story and perform them during the telling of the story. See below for some sample ideas.</p> <p><b>Extension:</b> Learn and perform the South African chant <i>Where is the rain?</i> Find the pulse of the chant and tap it on knees as an accompaniment. Add an additional accompanying layer by taking a group of words from the chant e.g. 'wish it would rain'. Clap the rhythm of the words. Transfer the rhythm on to un-pitched percussion instruments. Repeat the rhythmic phrase as an accompanying ostinato. Integrate the chant into the class composition. Where is the best place for it? At the beginning? In the middle? At the end?</p>
Plenary	<p>After the completion of each episode, give pupils the opportunity to appraise their music by identifying three aspects that worked well and one aspect that could be improved. At the end of the complete composition, pupils can assess the whole piece in the same way.</p>

## Example ideas for the descriptive episodes:

### The Kapiti Plain (using dynamics and duration):

Create a whole-class piece that describes the sun-soaked savannah:

Background hand drum roll (or using all instruments) that crescendos and de-crescendos.

Foreground: bird calls or animal sounds that combine and contrast long and short sounds (vocalised or using instruments e.g. a triangle for a bird or a shaker for a snake).

### **The black cloud (using duration):**

Use the rhythm patterns introduced in the starter activity as an ostinato that begins softly, gets louder and louder and suddenly ends with a long 'roll'.

### **Grass all brown and dead (using timbre):**

Create a quiet background 'wash' of dry brittle sounds e.g. shakers, scrapers, grease proof paper. Combined with:

### **Cows all hungry and dry**

Create a foreground of cattle sounds e.g. random mooing and groaning sounds getting louder and then softer.

### **Kipat standing on one leg**

Rhythmically chant the following words and combine them with a tapped pulse:

Kipat, Kipat, standing on one leg,

Kipat, Kipat watching all his herd,

Kipat, Kipat, standing on one leg,

Kipat, Kipat, like a big stork bird

Compose a melody to the words using either three pitches i.e. E, G & A or a pentatonic scale i.e. C, D, E, G, A (common to many African cultures). Sing the song accompanied by the tapped pulse.

### **The eagle who dropped a feather:**

Ask pairs of pupils to compose a slow, descending melody on a pitched percussion instrument that describes the feather floating to the ground. Each melody should feature some steps and slides.

### **The bow that shoots an arrow into the cloud:**

Using an actual bow, pull the string inwards until it touches the wood of the bow. Tie it to the wood in a proportion of about 1/3 – 2/3. Tap each length of the string with a thin stick to produce two pitches. Compose a short melody that fits the rhythm of the following words: "This is the bow, so long and strong". Using an up-ended xylophone create an ascending glissando to represent the arrow being shot into the air.

### **Thunder, lightning and rain (using tempo and dynamics):**

Compose a weather picture that consists of:

Vocal and instrumental drips, pops and drops that start as slow and get gradually faster to represent the rainfall.

A drum roll that gets louder and then softer to represent the thunder, combined with a spun cymbal which eventually crashes on to the floor.

A cymbal that has a drumstick drawn across it and then struck to represent the lightning.

### **Kapiti Plain music**

Repeat the music composed for the first episode.

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## Worksheet: Lyric Sheet for Kenya - bringing the rain to the Kapiti Plain

### South African Chant: Where Is the Rain?

The giraffe and the elephant went for a walk. They stopped in some shade and started to talk; "I wish it would rain," said the giraffe with a sigh. "I'm tired of watching the clouds pass us by!" "Yes," said the elephant, "Where is the rain? I wish I could eat fresh green leaves again. The sun is so hot and the land is so dry; When will the rain fall from the sky?"

Later in the day the sky turned grey, The flying ants flew out to say, "The rain is coming! We smell it in the air! And in the distance, thunder we hear!" The giraffe and the elephant looked up at the sky And heard the black eagle give forth his cry, "The rain has come, the rivers will flow; The dry season is over; now the green grass will grow!"

*Note: Most rivers in Africa are dependent upon the rains. During the dry season they literally dry up and leave a brown, twisting, snake-like path. The rainy season in KwaZulu is Summer time, when the area experiences the most fantastic thunder storms imaginable, and large flying ants always appear right before the first big storms!*