

Key Stage 2

The place of folk music in the primary music curriculum

This document gives an indication of how folk and traditional music can help teachers enhance and deliver aspects of the National Curriculum for Music in England at Key Stage 2, and suggests a range of supporting resources created by folk artist-educators.

National Curriculum in England: Key Stage 2 Music

Key Stage 2 Music Subject Content	Links to folk music
Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folk repertoire provides simple, easily accessible pieces that lend themselves well to ensemble performances and arrangements, with the ability to simplify both the melody and accompanying harmonies. • Develop fluency, control and accuracy by learning and playing folk tunes and songs by ear • Perform folk tunes and songs to an audience, or play to accompany dancing eg. a ceilidh • Solo performance of folk music and song gives space for personal interpretation and expression • Many folk songs (including sea shanties), with robust choruses and refrains, lend themselves well to group singing in simple two- or three-part harmony
Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the inter-related dimensions of music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop skills in learning and playing by ear to help with instinctive music-making and improvisation • Rework and create new versions of folk songs and tunes • Write new compositions using folk song or melodies, rhythms, structures and conventions as a starting point
Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn a variety of folk tunes and songs by ear • Folk songs and tunes can be simple, repetitive, and easily accessible for

	<p>pupils to learn by ear and recall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to a variety of folk rhythms (eg jigs 6/8, reels 2/4 or 4/4, hornpipes 4/4, waltzes 3/4) to establish pulse and rhythm • Compare the sounds of traditional music and instruments from around the world
Use and understand staff and other musical notations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folk tunes and song melodies are often written down in manuscript books in their basic form. Folk musicians add stylistic elements and interpret the tunes to their own taste.
Appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to, review and appreciate contemporary and archival recordings of folk songs and tunes • Invite a folk musician to perform live – they often combine singing with instrumental playing on more than one instrument • Listen to, compare and appreciate different versions of the same folk song or tune, as all traditional musicians interpret pieces differently • Listen to compositions by contemporary folk artists • Develop an understanding of the aural tradition. Often the composers of folk tunes and songs are unknown and the music has survived because it was valued, played and passed on by generations of people. Each folk tune or song has been crafted by many musicians as they move between people and places.
Develop an understanding of the history of music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about cultural traditions local to the school • Learn about oral transmission of folk music and intangible cultural heritage • Learn about folk sessions, ceilidhs, barn dances and festivals • Learn about playing for dancing and the connections between folk music and dance (eg morris, clog and ceilidh dancing) • Learn about cultural, social and historical contexts of folk music and links to people and places eg. social commentary, personal and collective histories • Understand the stories behind and the journeys of folk tunes and songs, and how they travel and change through time

Learning Resources

EFDSS' award-winning Resource Bank provides freely downloadable materials for using English traditional folk song, music, dance, drama and other arts in your teaching and learning. The following resources support aspects of the primary music curriculum:

- **Essex Folk Song Discovery: Coastal Songs:** <https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/essex-folk-song-discovery-2-coastal-songs>
- **A Sailor's Life: Key Stage 2:** <https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/a-sailors-life>
- **Coal Mining with Folk Arts and Poetry:** <https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/coal-mining-with-folk-arts-and-poetry>
- **Rapper Set for Key Stage 2 Instruments - Yorkshire Tune** <https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/rapper-set-ks2-yorkshire-tune>
- **Ceilidh band project:** <https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/ceilidh-band-project>

Visit www.efdss.org/resourcebank to browse more resources