

Year 6, Unit 5 Overview

How Does Music Shape Our Way of Life?

Using Chords and Structure

Introduction

In each unit, children are asked a question, intended as an entry point for exploring one of six broad **Social Themes**. These six themes are overlapping.

The exploration of each theme accompanies them on their musical journey throughout this Scheme, and hopefully beyond! As the learners grow, the questions and entry points for the Social Themes evolve. All the while, they are encouraged to be responsible and kind citizens of the world and constructive but critical thinkers. The unit question can be discussed throughout each unit up to and including the final unit performance.

Musically, students are constantly touching upon all key musical elements and skills, building upon these as they progress through each lesson, unit and year. As well as this, there is also a **Musical Spotlight** to each unit. This by no means indicates that there is only one musical aspect or concept being considered and developed – it just allows one chosen musical element, aspect or skill to come to the fore for contemplation, discussion and development, for the duration of that unit.

Unit 5 Social Theme:

In this unit, we ask '**How Does Music Shape Our Way of Life?**' as an entry point for the broad Social Theme of '**Music Is a Friend, Guide and Support**'. This is relevant to learning topics such as identity, motivation, sports, courage, comfort, feelings, psychology, values, loneliness, friendship and other topics as you, the teacher, see fit.

More detail on this Social Theme and how it might be explored in the classroom can be found in the **Social Themes Overview** document, where you can find more description on:

- How music can play a significant part in helping us get through our daily life, in improving our quality of life and in being a part of – even shaping – our way of life.
- Music's psychological impact, which is increasingly recognised, including in scientific research.
- How listening to music might accompany every step of someone's working day.

- How (on a larger timescale) music punctuates the important parts of many people's lives. Every step of the way, music is there.
- How musical artists are often role models and influencers who are admired and followed, or considered as moral guides.
- How songs that are a part of our identity and history are often very consoling and reassuring in times of need. Some songs are even credited with saving lives or inspiring major turning points in a listener's life. For musicians themselves, music is even more intimately linked to their own path.
- How there are many ways we can consider how music accompanies and affects our own personal journeys. This can be a fruitful topic of conversation – inside or outside the classroom!

Social Theme: Cross-Curricular Links and Further Exploration and Inquiry

The descriptions above – on music as a friend, guide, support and companion throughout our daily lives – are intended to give teachers some ideas and direction as to potential cross-curricular opportunities and avenues for further thematic exploration beyond the songs, music and content encountered in this unit. Just as music is all-pervasive in society and our daily lives, we hope you find ways to tie it into all your learning, beyond the purely musical education offered by our curriculum.

The six Social Themes of the Charanga curriculum are all overlapping, and much of the text describing the other Social Themes is very relevant to the Social Theme in Unit 5.

Unit 5 Musical Spotlight:

In this unit, the Musical Spotlight is '**Using Chords and Structure**'. You will continue to learn about all the Foundational Elements of Music with a focus on **chords** and **structure**, while working implicitly with all the other elements of music as you go through the steps of the unit.

We know what chords and structure are. Every piece of popular music has a structure and is built around a set of chords. In this unit, you will have the option to create your own song as part of a 'Song Creator Series'. The supporting videos and documentation are signposted in the lesson plans.

Connections Between the Musical Spotlight and the Social Theme

As we have seen in this unit's Social Theme, music plays a part in shaping our lives. How do we, in turn, shape music? Some ways to think about this are through musical structure and form, and through chords.

Further Exploration

Musical Structure

All human art has structure and form. In its broadest sense, music IS structure and form: it is an organisation of sound by the musician or composer. Once we lose a sense of organisation behind music or art, we lose a sense of meaning and we no longer see it as a creation. It then sounds like an accident or a random collection of musical elements. We might like the sound of the wind, but because we don't identify a human as having decided when and how it blows, we don't normally consider it music, or at least, we don't understand it as having intention behind it, as art.

Why do we recognise structure and form as having human significance? Structure and form rely on some kind of repetition and/or selection (eg a recurring chorus or repeated melodic pattern of five notes). This implies human choice, which in turn signifies intention and value to us. Creation that implies intention and value is understood by us as a kind of communication, and communication by another human resonates deeply with us.

In this unit, you will be engaging partly with different ways in which music can have structure and form. As a diagnostic assessment or provocation for the unit, you might want to discuss the nature of form in art and music and think of ways in which musical elements might be used to indicate form.

Chords

In music, chords are groups of notes played at the same time, often to support the melody of a piece or song.

It seems that chords have not always existed in music: from the historical written records we have, chords evolved during a broader development of the musical element of harmony over the last few hundred years, at least in Europe. Chords are something we have gradually developed – a way in which we have shaped musical structure over time.

A common use of chords in modern music is that of the typical guitarist-singer-songwriter. Guitars have six strings and so normally guitars can play up to six notes at the same time – this is achieved when the guitarist uses one hand to place their fingers on certain notes on the fretboard, and the other hand to strum (play) all six strings simultaneously. This means that a set of up to six notes are played together, and this creates a chord. Once the fretting hand changes its position, a new chord can be strummed by the picking hand.

In this way, the singer-songwriter creates a set of chords as a backdrop, or foundation, for the melody and words they will sing. Chords can be compared to background colours (for example, representing the blue sky and the green grass) upon which an artist then paints a (melodic) character in the foreground.

Chords can be used in many other ways, but thinking of them as a musical backdrop of colours for a melody can be a helpful starting point while learning to play, use and respond to them for the first time. They open a whole new world of possibilities for every musician!

Musical structure and chords are often closely related: a new section of music in a larger piece might introduce a different set (or 'progression') of chords at the same time. Chordal structure is often one of the main elements in determining the general structure of a piece. Pop music is a perfect example of this, with verses, choruses and bridges often being identifiable mainly through changes in chord progressions used, along with the melody and lyrics they accompany.

As we shape sound into music, it in turn shapes our lives, accompanying every life stage.

Song-Centred Entry Points of Learning

The entry point for both the Musical Spotlight and Social Theme of each unit is a collection of new weekly songs. The songs are the heart of each lesson's learning. The Musical Spotlight is 'lived and breathed' through the musical resources and activities; the Social Theme is provoked by a question which teachers can use to venture into lively inquiry, discussion, debate and learning, and also to link to any cross-thematic or cross-curricular educational opportunities that might arise.

Lessons and Learning in a Spiral Curriculum

As lessons progress through the units and year groups, the key learning is repeated, musical skills are reinforced and the learning deepens. Children quickly become familiar with the musical activities, through which they acquire new, or reinforce previous, musical knowledge and understanding.

To support intense and rapid learning, the musical activities are designed in one of two ways:

1. The activities can be a repeat of the previous week, in order to embed and rehearse key musical skills.
2. The activities can be a repeat of previous musical skills but have different content, in order to strengthen and apply previous musical learning.

As the children move through the Scheme, they acquire new knowledge and skills and deepen their understanding and application of previous learning. This spiral approach leads to deeper, more secure learning and musical mastery.

Differentiation

Music education is extremely relevant to multiple aspects of differentiation for learning.

This Scheme is developed with the express intention of supporting each educator to cater for the variety of individual learner-types as they normally would like to, but through a music education lens.

Throughout the Units of Work, you will find that the guidance, supporting documentation and structure of the lessons in the Charanga resources take care of many of the more musical details, while empowering you to think about and adapt to the needs of the students you are teaching. In most cases, these will be students you probably already know very well from a holistic, learning perspective. Therefore, with these supporting materials and your existing teaching skills, you should be able to deliver any Charanga music lesson in a way that caters appropriately for the diversity in your classroom.

More detail and guidance on differentiation in music education and in our curricula can be found in the **Curriculum Overview** documents.

Teaching the Lessons of This Unit

This six-week Unit of Work is aligned with the official National Curriculum for Music and the non-statutory Model Music Curriculum Guidance published by the DfE in 2021. It is clearly sequenced with high musical expectations that give all children the opportunity to learn about, enjoy and explore music.

It meets all the required standards, skills and knowledge needed for a full, holistic music education.

This unit sets out sequences of learning around a song in key musical areas which, over time, all contribute towards the steadily increasing development of musicianship:

- Listening
- Singing
- Playing
- Improvising and Composing
- Performing

Supporting Documentation for This Unit

Lesson Documentation:

1. A full lesson plan including:
 - The musical features to be learnt
 - A summary of each activity
 - A learning focus for each activity
 - Knowledge and skills for each activity

A brief lesson plan including:

- The lesson structure
- A learning focus for each activity

2. A Listen and Respond Guide for each lesson

Unit Documentation:

1. An Understanding Music Guide
2. Assessment documentation including:
 - Teacher Assessment
 - Knowledge Organisers
 - Music Passports

Year Documentation:

1. A Key Stage 2 Guide
2. Year 6 Musical Progression
3. Year 6 Theory Guide
4. Style Indicators
5. Glossary

The Unit Structure

Activity 1: Musicianship Options

Activity 2: Listening

Activity 3: Singing

Activity 4: Playing

Activity 5: Composing and Improvising

Activity 6: Performing

The Unit Structure Explained

- Steps 1–6 feature three different songs with connected musical activities.
- Steps 1, 3 and 5 include a Listen and Respond activity related to the song being learnt.
- Steps 2 and 4 include a different Listen and Respond activity for enrichment.
- Step 6 repeats one of the Listen and Respond activities for assessment purposes.
- Step 6 is an ‘Assessment Checkpoint’ week. Teachers have the option of delivering a standard music lesson or having the children complete some, or all, of the assessment tasks. Please refer to the **Assessment** documentation provided.

Activity Descriptions

Activity 1: Musicianship Options

As a class, complete the Understanding Music activity in each step. The musical learning in Understanding Music is central to each unit, so please use Improve Together as an optional activity for variation and enrichment.

Understanding Music

In KS2, this activity supports the children in their understanding of duration, pulse, rhythm and pitch. Over time, this activity introduces a range of notation, time signatures and key signatures. It is designed to bring everyone together at the beginning of the lesson to learn, embed or revisit the music theory required for the year. This activity is essential to the development of children’s knowledge, but feel free to sometimes use the Improve Together activity.

The musical content and progression of each Understanding Music activity can also be viewed in your **Understanding Music Guide**.

The Musical Features in the Understanding Music Activity for This Unit:

Tempo: 76 bpm (beats per minute = tempo)

Time signature: 6/8 (six quaver beats in every bar)

Key signature: D minor

Rhythmic patterns using: Dotted crotchets, triplet quavers and quavers

Melodic patterns using: D, E, F, G and A

Improvise Together

This activity gives the children an opportunity to practise improvising together. There isn't an improvise activity connected to every song, so this can be used as an option. Here, they can practise their ideas together over a backing track. You can take it in turns to play when looping the track.

Time signature: 5/4 (five crotchet beats in every bar)

Key signature: G major

The children can use the notes: G, A, B, C and D or G, A, B, C, D, E and F#

Activity 2: Listening

Listen and Respond

In this Unit, the children will listen and respond to the following:

Step 1: Wake Up! by Joanna Mangona and Chris Taylor

Step 2: We Shall Overcome by Unknown

Step 3: Down By The Riverside by Unknown

Step 4: You Belong With Me by Joanna Mangona and Chris Taylor

Step 5: Dance The Night Away by Joanna Mangona and Chris Taylor

This content-rich, interactive activity explores the impact that music can have on us, its design and cultural place; contextualising the music your students will listen to. Accompanying each lesson plan is a **Listen and Respond Guide**, with all the research and information that is needed for the children to complete the tasks and activities you and they will see on-screen.

Each subsequent musical activity that follows Listen and Respond reinforces the learning for musical knowledge and skills that culminate in a performance.

The Listen and Respond activity has four on-screen interactive tabs to work through:

1. Listen

Listen to the music together. Remember this is the first time the children will hear the music that is central to their learning for each lesson. Use the on-screen questions as a focus and discuss them together as a class before and after listening. This activity has been designed to explore the children's initial response to the music, how they might move, feelings and first impressions. As the children get older, this becomes an opportunity to consolidate previous learning, eg is it a style they have heard before, or is it an unusual time signature or groove?

2. Respond

It is important that the children respond in any way they feel comfortable. All responses are valid – musical and non-musical. The on-screen resource will focus on what is needed for that particular year.

Remember: each question has its own tile, don't click on the answer until the children have discussed the question. Use the discussion and the information from the tiles to learn about the particular features of the style of the song and its design.

3. Understand

This provides an opportunity for a class discussion about why the song was written and how the song connects to its social and cultural context. Use the discussion and the information from the tiles to learn about the background of the music or song. The 'Understand' tiles always have a key fact that is historical, a key fact that is cultural and a key fact that is cross-curricular. The 'Understand' tab facts will help the children connect the song to its cultural, historical and social context as appropriate.

4. Connect

The children will learn the style indicators of the song or music. Looking at the interactive musical timeline 'Connections: A Selection of Musical Styles and Their Origins' will help them to highlight the connections of the song/music to other styles and place it in time.

Activity 3: Singing

Learn to Sing the Song

You will have warmed up your voices in Understanding Music.

On the screen, you will have the option to break the song down into manageable learning sections. Add clapping and movement in the relevant sections and have fun!

There is an option to follow the score if you wish to see the notated version.

Unit 5 Songs to Be Learnt:

- **Song 1** – Wake Up! by Joanna Mangona and Chris Taylor
- **Song 2** – Down By The Riverside by Unknown
- **Song 3** – Dance The Night Away by Joanna Mangona and Chris Taylor

Activity 4: Playing

Play Your Instruments with the Song

Use the **Musical Progression** document for further guidance.

On the screen, you will see animated glockenspiels and recorders playing four differentiated parts. You decide with the children which parts are the most suitable for them. The sheet music is available, too. Some of these instrumental parts are challenging, but have been written so that every child has an opportunity to play. Their skills will build over time, so the children will probably swap between parts regularly.

Previously (in KS1), there has been a ‘sound before symbol’ approach. This approach is still an option, but show the children the notated parts as part of their learning. The **Music Theory Guide** and videos will support learning notation.

There are also four differentiated parts available for each band instrument; Part 1 is the harder part.

Instrumental parts are available for the following songs in this unit:

- **Step 1** – Wake Up! by Joanna Mangona and Chris Taylor
- **Step 3** – Down By The Riverside by Unknown
- **Step 5** – Dance The Night Away by Joanna Mangona and Chris Taylor

These are the notes you will be using on glockenspiel or recorder. There are four differentiated parts; Part 1 is the hardest (this colour denotes deeper learning):

Songs	Playing Instrument Notes			
	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
Wake Up! (Glockenspiel) 4/4, F minor, 120 bpm	F, A \flat , E \flat (Crotchets, quavers)	F, A \flat , E \flat (Crotchets, quavers)	F, A \flat (Minims, crotchets)	F (Minims)
(Recorder)	F, A \flat , E \flat (Crotchets, quavers)	F, A \flat , E \flat (Crotchets, quavers)	F, A \flat , E \flat (Crotchets, quavers)	F, A \flat , E \flat (Crotchets)
Down By The Riverside (Glockenspiel) 4/4, G major, 108 bpm	G, A, B, D, E, F \sharp (Semibreves, dotted minims, minims, dotted crotchets, crotchets, quavers)	G, A, B, D, E, F \sharp (Semibreve, minims, crotchets, quavers)	G, A, B, D, E, F \sharp (Semibreves, minims, crotchets)	G (Minims)
(Recorder)	G, A, B, D, E, F \sharp (Semibreves, dotted minims, minims, dotted crotchets, crotchets, quavers)	G, A, B, D, E, F \sharp (Semibreve, minims, crotchets, quavers)	G, A, B (Minims, crotchets)	G (Crotchets)
Dance The Night Away (Glockenspiel) 4/4, F minor, 120 bpm	F, G, A \flat , B \flat , C, E \flat (Minims, crotchets, dotted quavers, quavers, semiquavers)	F, G, A \flat , B \flat , C, E \flat (Minims, crotchets, quavers)	F, G, A \flat , B \flat , C, E \flat (Minims, crotchets, quavers)	F (Minims)
(Recorder)	F, G, A \flat , B \flat , C (Minims, crotchets, dotted quavers, quavers, semiquavers)	F, G, A \flat , B \flat , C (Minims, crotchets, quavers)	F, G, A \flat , B \flat , C (Minims, crotchets, quavers)	F (Crotchets)

Activity 5: Composing and Improvising

Use the **Musical Progression** document for guidance.

Think about the differences between improvising and composing.

As you know, when someone improvises, they make up their own tune that has never been heard before. It is not written down and therefore will never be heard again. If you write your improvisation down in any way, it becomes a composition and you can play it again with your friends. The music comes from inside the performer and belongs to them; it's not a question of doing it 'right' or 'wrong'. If the activity is set up properly within correct musical boundaries, children can only succeed.

You will be using three or five notes, or sometimes even a full scale (see the relevant **Musical Progression** documents).

There are two songs in this unit to improvise and compose with, plus additional opportunities in the Improve Together, Music Notepad and Quickbeats apps ([this colour denotes deeper learning](#)):

Songs	Improvising		Composing		
	3 notes	5 notes	3 notes	5 notes	7 notes
Wake Up! 4/4, F minor, 120 bpm	N/A	N/A	F, G, A \flat	F, G, A \flat , B \flat , C	F, G, A \flat , B \flat , C, D \flat , E \flat
Down By The Riverside 4/4, G major, 108 bpm	G, A, B	G, A, B, C, D	N/A	N/A	N/A

Improvisation

In every unit, there is an opportunity for improvisation and for the children to express themselves. Each week, there is an option within 'Musicianship' to Improve Together (see above), and with some songs, the children will also Improve with the Song.

You can improvise all together, in groups or as a solo – you decide. As in KS1, the children can use their voices or clap (rhythmic improvisation) if they are unsure. Then, they can use one note and progress to two, three and five notes only when they are ready. Always start the improvisation with note one of the given sequence.

Composition

In every unit, there is an opportunity for composing and communicating the children's musical ideas and feelings.

- The composition could be a class task or an individual task.
- The composition could be presented on its own or as part of the performance of a unit song.

There is support in the **full lesson plans** as to how to approach these activities and you can watch an **accompanying video**.

There are three different composition options:

Option 1: Compose with the Song

In this activity, the children will create a melody. Choose the 'Compose with the Song' app in the lesson viewer and the notes provided to create a simple melody that will fit with the song. Choose from the differentiated note sets and as a whole class or in groups, compose a new, simple melody that will be played with the song in its performance.

Creating the Compositions – A Whole-Class Activity:

Compose the melody with one person on the whiteboard. Encourage all children to put forward their ideas. After the tune has been composed, children will learn to play it on their instruments, so keep it simple! You might want to split the class into groups for this activity if the children have access to iPads or computers.

Click 'play' on the composition screen and you will hear the backing track. Drag and drop the notes that you want to use in your composition. Note-names are written in the vertical column on the left-hand side.

Option 2: Music Notepad

Using the Music Notepad app, create your own compositions as a class or in differentiated groups. The lesson plans will give you the information you need for your class to complete this activity, if chosen.

The home screen of the app allows you to tailor the settings of your composition by selecting the time and key signatures, clef and number of bars. Once these have been selected, you are able to notate your own composition.

Option 3: Quickbeats

If you have chosen the Quickbeats activity, the children will create their own beats and rap over them. There are video tutorials provided for support, but the children can create their own additional lyrics, raps and melodies.

Documents/Videos to Support This Activity:

- Create – A Guide to Writing Your Own Music
- Quick Guide to Lyric Writing
- Video Tutorial – Writing Raps – Alphabet Track
- Video Tutorial – Writing Raps – Rhyme Guide
- Video Tutorial – A Guide to Quickbeats
- Create Your Lyrics and Arrangement – Beat 1 Chillin’
- Create Your Lyrics and Arrangement – Beat 2 Banger
- Create Your Lyrics and Arrangement – Beat 3 Throwback

Activity 6: Performing

Perform with the Song

Perform and share the learning that has taken place in each lesson and at the end of the unit.

Here, you have the opportunity to share the fun you had in the lesson. You can sing and add any of the musical activities you have practised with the song/s. Create and present a holistic performance. This will be a short performance for sharing at the end of the lesson. As a class, you can perform at any time to an audience. You might decide to organise a special concert at a different time. Talk together with the children about each element of the lesson/s and what they would like to perform. Share thoughts and feelings.

All aspects of the musical learning in these units are connected. The children don’t just sing a song, they learn all aspects of it – its historical connections, its narrative, theory, cultural context and style. They then learn and perform the song, with options for improvising, composing, playing their instruments and, of course, movement. Being part of a performance can mean organising, presenting and recording it. If possible, record the performance; children can watch it and use it as a basis for assessment. Children will learn to revisit a performance and reflect on it in greater depth. They will discuss, contextualise and refine their ideas, and look back on the progress they have made. Consider how the children might improve the performance and how they might react to feedback.

Recording your 'end of lesson' sharing can be part of the **formative assessment** process. You

will have the option to revisit and perform a song/s of your choice in Step 6 as part of the **summative assessment** process. Talk about the progress that has been made.

Performing is and should be a wonderful and joyful experience for everyone. It is important for children to learn how to behave when performing and when they are part of an audience. Both are important and both have a history of custom and practice in different venues and for different occasions. For some, performing music will become a key part of musicianship. For everyone, regular performance experience and attention to basic performing etiquette enable children to become happy, confident performers, who also feel at ease participating as part of an audience for other performers.

Activity 7: Quiz (Step 6)

Theory Quiz (Step 6 only, end of each unit)

This theory quiz summarises all of the musical learning that has taken place in the unit. There is also a more summative, general quiz for the entire year at the end of Unit 6. Each quiz has a different number of questions and can be used to suit lesson pacing and scheduling appropriately. Each question is multiple-choice and allows you to select the correct answer before moving on.

End of Year 6 Reflection Opportunity

Model Music Curriculum Social Theme 5 – Music Is a Friend, Guide and Support

The end of Year 6 provides an opportunity to reflect on each student's primary school musical learning journey. From a more purely musical perspective, this can be done right at the very end of the year, during Unit 6 of Year 6. However, from a point of reviewing learning and thoughts on the broader societal and personal role played by music, the end of each unit might be a good time. In this way, each of Charanga's six Social Themes can be considered in its own right at this major learning 'checkpoint'.

As you progress through this unit, see if you can take the time to reflect with students on their longer-term thoughts on how music is a guide, a friend and a support. How have their thoughts grown or changed on this issue? Have they noticed this role of music more outside of school? Is it a theme that particularly interests them and something they might think more about or focus upon in their secondary school musical life? Has it influenced their ways of making music and their musical choices? Have they been able to make links with other parts of life that are linked to guidance, friendship/company and support?

This reflection could take many forms – discussions, writing exercises or even through creation, such as a song or composition!

Unit Summary

Step	Activity 1: Musicianship Options	Activity 2: Listen and Respond	Activity 3: Singing	Activity 4: Playing	Activity 5: Improvising and Composing	Activity 6: Performing
1	Option 1 Understanding Music Option 2 Improvise Together	Wake Up!	Wake Up!	Play instrumental parts	N/A	Perform and share what has taken place in the lesson
2	Option 1 Understanding Music Option 2 Improvise Together	We Shall Overcome	Wake Up!	N/A	Options: - Compose with the Song - Quickbeats	Perform and share what has taken place in the lesson
3	Option 1 Understanding Music Option 2 Improvise Together	Down By The Riverside	Down By The Riverside	Play instrumental parts	N/A	Perform and share what has taken place in the lesson
4	Option 1 Understanding Music Option 2 Improvise Together	You Belong With Me	Down By The Riverside	N/A	Options: - Improvise Together - Improvise with the Song	Perform and share what has taken place in the lesson
5	Option 1 Understanding Music Option 2 Improvise Together	Dance The Night Away	Dance The Night Away	Play instrumental parts	N/A	Perform and share what has taken place in the lesson
6	Option 1 Understanding Music Option 2 Improvise Together Option 3 Theory Quiz	We Shall Overcome	Revisit a song of your choice	Play instrumental parts with your chosen song, if available	Option to revisit Improvise and Compose activities	Perform and share what has taken place in the lesson and prepare for a concert