

Loud and Quiet

Turn it Up, Turn it Down

Artist/Author: Antonio M. Gómez



Time Needed: 10-20 minutes

Arts Focus: Music

Age Range: 3-6

Mini-Lesson Description:

In this lesson, learners will practice recognizing and creating sounds that are both loud and quiet.

Key Concepts:

Sounds; Volume; Dynamics; Contrast; Loud; Noisy; Quiet; Soft.

Materials Needed/Prep:

- Bodies and voices
- A space free of objects that distract
- Room to move hands and/or stomp feet
- This activity works best when learners are in a sitting circle (ie; Morning Circle) or a standing circle. Once introduced, it can also be used with learners sitting and facing you, such as during rug time, following a read aloud or lesson, or when the learner(s) may need to be energized and re-focused.
- Various objects such as musical instruments, pots and pans, etc. and sound clips can be added. White boards or chart paper can be used for graphing extension (*see variations, below*).

Step-by-Step:

1. Start by sitting in a circle with legs crossed and let the learner(s) know you are going to start a beat and they will join in. Ask them to listen carefully to how the sound changes but the rhythm or pattern stays the same.
2. Once everyone is clapping/tapping/patting the beat with you, alter the dynamics (volume) of the beat without changing the tempo (speed).
3. Count out, "1, 2, ready stop!" to signal the end of the pattern. Ask the learner(s) if they noticed what changed. Often, learners will confuse the concept of volume with the concept of speed.
4. Give another example by using your speaking voice, varying between a loud and quiet speaking voice. See if this helps the learner(s) distinguish between loud and quiet. You can emphasize terms like "loud," "quiet," "soft," and "volume."
5. Start the pattern again, this time by yourself and invite the learner(s) to listen carefully and give a thumb up/down/sideways as the volume changes from loud to quiet, rotating their wrist and thumb as if they were changing a volume knob.
6. Return to everyone doing the pattern together and practicing getting louder and quieter.

Variations and Next Steps:

- Instead of using thumbs up and thumbs down, have the learner(s) raise and lower their hand(s) to various levels to simulate the volume bar on a cell phone. (They may be more familiar with this representation of volume as represented by up/down bars or arrows than a knob).
- Record and share sound samples the learner(s) might be familiar with, including the sounds of birds singing, sirens going by, a truck or bus in reverse, the sound from recess, and so on. Have the learner(s) represent the volume level with each sound by raising/lowering their thumbs or hands.
- Challenge the false correlation between loud=fast and slow=quiet by doing fast rhythms quietly and slow rhythms loudly.
- Introduce musical terms: "Dynamics" for volume and "Tempo" for speed.
- Use musical instruments or "Found Sound", like pots and pans and cardboard boxes to create sounds that are both loud and quiet.

Watch a video of this Creative Start Mini-Lesson and find more at: <https://www.arts.wa.gov/creative-start/>