

LESSON PLAN: Naming Guitar Strings

Objective:

Students will learn to identify by sight and sound the way strings are numbered while using various picking techniques to play them.

Resources:

Picks (if applicable), teacher demonstration, student demonstrations.

Vocabulary and Terms:

Strumming, picking, strings 1 through 6

Procedures:

- 1 Tell the class that strings are numbered 1 through 6 from “toes to chin”. Demonstrate while playing them in this order and counting out loud. Demonstrate a couple of times to make sure this is clear in their understanding.
- 2 Point out to them that string number 1 has a “high” sound which you can imitate singing in a high voice, and string number 6 has a “low” sound which you can also imitate to make the point. Invite them to play along with you as you call out the numbers of each individual string. For fun you can invite them to sing the string number to the actual pitch of each string—this will of course result in students trying to sing notes that are outside of their vocal range, but help them to pay attention with their ears to the relative high and low sounds the strings produce.
- 3 Do the same thing in reverse, moving from “chin to toes” beginning on string 6 and naming out loud as you repeat for strings 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1. Next ask students to play string 1 four times in a row. Then move to string 2, followed by string 3, etc. moving from “toes to chin”.
- 4 Repeat this exercise moving from chin to toes playing strings in the order of 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1.

Extension:

Once the string numbers are obvious it's time to involve the ears. Just play and name string 1 and then string 6. Ask them which string you are playing while you play either one, allowing students to see what you are doing. After this becomes easy it's time to make the game harder by not allowing them to see what you're playing. Turn toward the wall, again asking them to name whether they are hearing string 1 or string 6. As they quickly learn to pay attention with their ears, compliment them on their progress and then invite volunteers from the class to “test” the other students. This “ear training” activity can be used every day as a warm up and can be expanded to include other strings, just be careful to move slowly enough that they always perceive doing this as easy. For example, if you add string 2 into the exercise along with strings 1 and 6, don't add another different string for a couple days or until it's obvious to you that everyone hears it.

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.K a. With guidance, explore and demonstrate awareness of music contrasts (such as high/low, loud/soft, same/different) in a variety of music selected for performance. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.Math.Content.K.G.A.1 Describe objects in the environment using names of shapes, and describe the relative positions of these objects using terms such as above, below, beside, in front of, behind, and next to.

