

Grade 1 AURAL Training



The first content statement in the Australian curriculum for Grades K-2 is to “**Develop aural skills by exploring and imitating sounds, pitch and rhythm patterns using voice, movement and body percussion**” and you’ll find similar statements in every curriculum around the world.

In the USA, the common core curriculum requires that we “**explore music’s expressive qualities (such as voice quality, dynamics, and tempo)**”, and an important step of achieving that is through aural training.

Aural skills are extremely important for every child, and it builds attentiveness and concentration which are key skills in all areas of life.

Aural is about experiencing musical concepts such as beat and melody, and it is only by repetition that we can really achieve that. We’ve provided ten lessons worth of material, but please remember that these lessons can and should be repeated several times each. The lessons also have built within them the flexibility of a second track, recorded without the clapping or singing, and this means that you, as the teacher, can customise the activity for your students.

Aural training does not have to be difficult, or time consuming. Unlike the *SING & PLAY*, *COMPOSE* or *CONNECT* parts of these lessons, you can’t structure a whole lesson based on one of these activities. These activities can and should be used as a 3-5 minute segment at the beginning of the session. There is no reason you couldn’t use it later in a session if you wish, but you’ll find it works best when the students are fresh, which is why it is always placed at the beginning of our lessons.

At this early stage there are only a few activities including **echo rhythm** and **echo singing**.

Echo rhythm is listening to a rhythm and reproducing it. The most obvious and best way to produce and replicate a rhythm is by clapping, however to add variety you can of course use other body percussion sounds or even instruments for this if you wish.

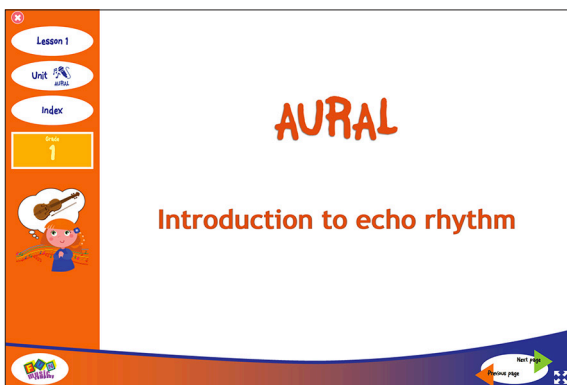
Echo singing is listening to a sung pattern and singing it back. For this we use the musical language of solfège, where we use the syllables do, re and mi to audiate, or mentally hear the pitch of the sounds.

You do not need to be an expert in solfège to be able to use this. Many teachers feel overwhelmed or nervous about using solfège, but there is no reason to feel that way. It is simply a way to learn about melody and pitch through singing, and it will develop wonderful skills in your students if you try it.

Also introduced to Grade 1 for the first time is **call and response**, where students need to sing back an answer to a musical question. This mixes things up a little bit, keeps the students thinking and also builds creativity as we prepare to use this in the *COMPOSE* unit as well.

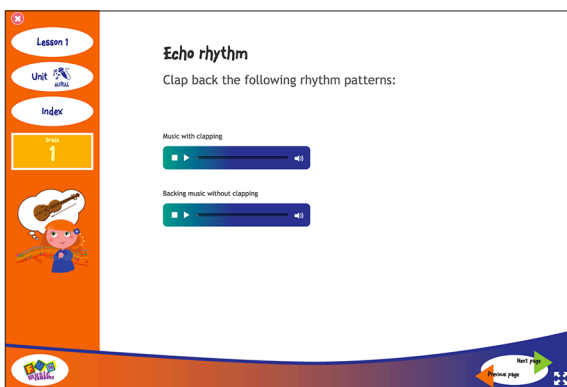


Echo rhythm



Start out by watching the included introduction video, or introduce the activity yourself if you feel confident to do so.

With all of these echo rhythm aural training activities you have a choice of using the included clapping track, or simply clapping the rhythms yourself and having the students clap back.



Remember to avoid showing any notation to the children, as the purpose of aural training is for students to develop their musical ear, rather than their eyes.

In every lesson we have reproduced the activity in sheet music for your reference. You do not need to be able to read music in order to complete this activity, you can simply use the provided track and echo it with the students. You do not need to reproduce this exactly if not using the track, it is only a guideline.

