

Mark Making & Sound: Part Two

By [Paula Briggs](#)

Mark making underpins all drawing activity. In Part Two of [Mark-Making and Sound](#), we explore how we might capture the spirit of a piece of music through abstract mark-making.

This resource is the second of three resources that explore how we can use sound to inspire mark-making.



This exercise aims to enable learners to develop mark-making skills without the pressure of trying to make a drawing that "looks like" something else. This activity aims to enable learners to link the marks they make, how they feel when they make them, and how others 'read' those marks.

How can we use sound to inspire personality into our mark-making? What kinds of marks will we make, inspired by the music we hear?

This resource can be used with ages 6 through to adults and takes between 5 minutes and 15 minutes.

A more open or able learner might be able to begin to capture the spirit of the music through visual marks. People "reading" the drawing might be able

to directly reference elements within the musical piece.

Please use this exercise in the context of the other [Mark Making and Sound exercises here](#). The text explanations on the other resources in this series apply to this resource, too.

Even very young children understand that we enjoy listening to music because of the variety of rhythms, melodies, and instruments within the piece. Likewise, they can make their own drawings more interesting by using a variety of marks, but we need to enable children to experience for themselves that they can invent their own mark-making language.

In this exercise, we will use music to inspire mark-making. In particular, we explore how the spirit of the music affects the pressure, speed, and movement of our hand/mark making.



This exercise can be used as a transitional exercise between activities or to precede other drawing activities. It's an ideal exercise to do as a [guided activity](#), i.e., with the teacher using verbal prompts and sounds to help the children.

Note to Teachers:

Please do try this exercise yourself a few times so you know how it feels to actually do the exercise before you run through it with pupils.

Watch the video above as a class so that the children can begin to appreciate some of the different ways that they can use their drawing tool, inspired by the sound.

You can then either use just the audio from the video so the children can create their own marks (it is important that they don't feel the need to

replicate the marks in the video), or you might choose your own music.

There is also a lot of scope for pupils to compose their own music or make their own musical choices, to help increase ownership and diversity of mark-making.



Without a visual subject matter (i.e., you are not drawing anything in particular), you will be making marks using your drawing tool, inspired by the sounds you hear.

It's really important to try and work intuitively and without overthinking what you are doing. This can take a little bit of practice, and it can also take a little bit of time to settle into the session. At first, the saboteur voice inside your

head might be telling you:

- I'm not doing it right
- This is silly
- I don't know what to do
- I'm pretending...

Try to ignore this voice. Acknowledge its presence, but politely tell the voice to shush. The more you can relax into the activity and stop resisting, the more you will get out of the exercise.

Always remember there is no right or wrong way of drawing in this exercise, only an "expanding" of what is being experienced.

To Start

Take a sheet of A3 or A2 cartridge paper, and a drawing tool: a soft pencil (2B, 4B, 6B) or a handwriting pen, or ink and brush, etc.

As you listen to the music, challenge yourself to make a variety of marks in response. To help push the diversity of marks you make, think about how you:

- Hold the drawing tool. For example, holding it firmly near the drawing end will give you

a different result than holding it lightly at the other end. Be experimental!

- Experiment with the pressure applied
- Experiment with the speed of movement
- Experiment with how you move your fingers, wrist, elbow, or shoulder.

Varying each of these in different combinations will help you make a more diverse set of marks.

Feel the energy of the sound, and let the same kind of energy travel down your arm to the drawing tool!

Tip:

If you feel like you're really struggling to let go and you can't stop that voice inside your head saying "I don't know what I'm doing", then try closing your eyes as you listen to the sounds and make the marks with your eyes closed.



Reflection

Once you have tried the exercise, you may like to ask the following questions to help you reflect upon the experience:

- Which marks do I like?
- Which marks are unexpected/ have I never made before?
- When I look at the marks, can I hear the sound that inspired me to make them?
- Can I see that my marks have character or personality? Do they convey emotion, for example, anger or care?

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