

24 Monster stomp

RESOURCES ▶ CD1 track 24 (performance); CD2 track 24 (backing)
▶ Warm ups: Nos. 13, 20

Information

We all respond to a strong beat and catchy tune and lyrics, and 'Monster stomp' leads us into a group of songs that convey important messages about the state of our environment. Children see and hear the news and will understand why we need to 'stomp out the bombs' (verse 4), and you might like to find an appropriate time to introduce this issue for class discussion. However, this song is also about enjoying being a monster—dancing and having fun—so don't shy away from involving movement. Let's 'free up' for this song! Also, given the relaxed atmosphere you are about to create, think about introducing peer assessment (see 'Ideas' below).

Starting

- Stand in a circle and warm up by chanting the chorus. Beat it out and stomp like a monster, and move! Children will soon pick this up. Try clapping every time the word 'monster' occurs.
- Work on the 'uh ah' phrase at the end of the chorus: make loud guttural sounds, rhythmically. Here is a rare excuse to be loud and vulgar, so encourage your singers to sound like monsters.

Teaching and rehearsing

- Children will learn the tune for the chorus quickly. With the group seated, sing it to them enthusiastically and introduce the idea of pitching the 'uh ah' sounds. Now sing it together.
- Sing verse 1 to the group, showing your enjoyment, and really *snarl* at the end. Practise the snarl with everyone. Who can do the best and fastest one? It needs to be fast, so the pick-up to the chorus isn't lost.
- Demonstrate how the verse joins to the chorus. Sing verse 1 to the group, and encourage them to join in on the chorus.
- Now sing the rest of the song and encourage the children to sing the chorus each time. Make the song your own; e.g. in verse 3 make the word 'ugliest' sound really ugly. This does not need to be beautiful singing.
- Next, sing each verse together. Make sure the rhythms are snappy and enjoy interesting words like 'slime' and 'slither' that seldom feature in songs. Children might like to play with these words as they would relish a new taste experience; exaggerate them and enjoy them—this is how we characterize each verse.
- Now get the group to stand and sing the whole song. Explain that they should be still during the verses (so

that they can concentrate on the words) and then move, monster-style, during the choruses. Begin precisely on the word 'ground' in bar 11 and end on 'aah!' in bar 18.

- Divide the children into groups to work on choreographing their monster-stomping ideas. Share these, and let the children decide how they want the chorus to be danced.

Ideas

- Experiment with different dynamics. Each verse should be softer than the chorus, and the more serious lyrics of verse 4 could be really soft, containing the exuberance for a moment. This will emphasize the significance of the words and draw in the audience.
- Pick out a few children to listen to the rest of the group and charge them with the responsibility of peer-assessing the performance of, say, verse 2. Could they hear all the words? Were the interesting words 'interesting'? How many 'goldfish' are there (i.e. singers moving their lips vaguely, but not committing to actual words)?
- To settle the group at the end of a lively session, sing the first verse semi-whispered, starting at half speed and getting slower and softer. Replace 'snarl' with 'snore' and insist on peace.

Listen out

- There are a number of rhythmic differences between verses, to accommodate extra syllables, so listen out for any obvious discrepancies and encourage a uniform approach. Even monsters need good choral discipline!
- Songs that are fun to move to are not necessarily fun to listen to. Every word is important, so demand full concentration and clamp down on any shouting immediately.
- Make sure that the pick-up to the chorus is audible and that the snarl hasn't grown in duration.

Performing

- If you have workshopped 'Monster stomp' don't resort to a 'concert performance', because children will be disappointed if they can't show their work in its fullness. You may have to be imaginative with your performance space, even using the aisles for just some of the group to stomp in.
- Try adding whistles, rattles, and other noisy instruments to the accompaniment or backing track!

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Words and Music:
Jon Bennett and John Perry

With enthusiasm ♩ = 120

mf Verse

1. If you want to be a mon - ster,
 (2.) hai - ry, munch - ing
 (3.) ug - li - est fa - ces a -
 (*mp*) (4.) say that mon - sters

mf (v.4: *mp*)

4

now's your chance, 'Cos ev - 'ry - bo - dy's do - ing the
 mon - ster moles, And we dig our way through
 - round the town, And e - ven when we laugh it looks
 should be shot, But we're a ve - ry gen - tle

6

mon - ster dance. Make a noise like an e - le - phan -
 prob - lem zones. With teeth and grunts and a
 like a frown. With a slime and a sli - ther, we
 friend - ly lot. We'll stomp out the bombs and the