

## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- To name some animals in Spanish
- To appreciate and appraise music, using simple Spanish to describe it
- To explore rhythm using Spanish words
- To discover animal sounds in Spanish
- To form short sentences in Spanish about music

# Link music and language with Saint Saens



Activities based around The Carnival of the Animals provide an enriching and positive cross-curricular learning experience, says **Lisa Stevens**

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With the increasing focus on delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, there comes the question of how to fit in all the areas of learning included in the primary curriculum. Cross-curricular projects and making links between subjects is one way of finding the time to meet demands while ensuring a positive learning experience. “Music is a universal language that embodies one of the highest forms of creativity,” states the Music Programme of Study for KS1 and KS2. Why not make links between two ‘languages’, therefore, and combine music and language skills in a short series of activities based around The Carnival of the Animals by Saint Saens?

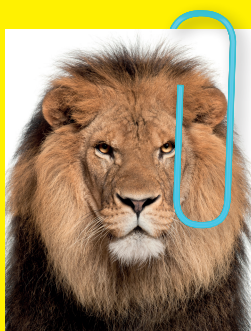


## START HERE

This lesson plan is the abridged version of three sessions so could equally be delivered as suggested here or as a series of shorter lessons; each section in itself could take an hour if fully explored.

Start off by presenting learners with some animal vocabulary. Choose the names of the animals from *El Carnaval de los Animales*: *un león, un gallo, un canguro, un pez, un cuco, un elefante, un burro, un pájaro, una tortuga, una gallina, un cisne*.

You could go straight for presenting the vocabulary with images – or for an added challenge for more advanced learners, you could show a list of the words and see if learners can deduce any of the vocabulary using cognates, knowledge of other languages or other decoding strategies. Combine repetition of the vocabulary with actions to further anchor the vocabulary.



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | EXPLORE RHYTHM AND SYLLABLES

New vocabulary requires lots of repetition to get it to stick. Start off by asking learners to repeat words, playing games such as ‘repeat if it’s correct’ or ‘name that animal’. Link the repetition to rhythm by clapping the rhythm of each word as you repeat. Then ask learners to guess which animal it is. For example, *un león* would be three one beat (crochet) claps; *un elefante* would be one beat, two half beats, then two one beat claps. Some rhythms would have multiple answers, such as *un gallo, un cuco, un cisne*. Once this has been rehearsed, assign groups of children one of the animal images and words. This will be their ‘instrument’ in a class symphony. The music curriculum

asks for learners to understand and use dynamics, tempo, timbre and texture; as the ‘conductor’ you bring in groups of children to clap and say their word to build texture and explore dynamics in a four-beat pattern – *un pez* is two beats and two rests; *un canguro* is four one-beat claps and so on. Use phrases such as *más alto* (louder), *más bajo* (quieter), and *más suave* (softer). Use gesture to bring groups in and fade out. A child could then be the conductor. For an idea of what it might sound like, visit [tinyurl.com/tpcarnaval](http://tinyurl.com/tpcarnaval).

### 2 | LISTEN, APPRAISE AND RESPOND

Tell the pupils that you’re going to listen to a suite of music called *El Carnaval de los Animales*; can they work out what it might be about? Now that the vocabulary is more familiar, play extracts of the music. If you’re using clips on



## “Music is a universal language that embodies one of the highest forms of creativity”

this lesson with UKS2/more experienced language learners, you could add reasons, too – such as *porque me relaja* (because it relaxes me), *es aburrida* (it's boring), and *es alegre* (it's lively/happy).

Introduce some adjectives to describe the music: *tranquila* (quiet), *lenta* (slow), *rápida* (fast), *ruidosa* (noisy), *ligera* (light), *pesada* (heavy), and *animada* (lively). And ask learners to form simple sentences, such as *La pieza es* (adjective), and *En mi opinión, la pieza se llama* (animal).

### 3 EXPLORE LANGUAGE AND USE OF VOICE

Think about the sounds that animals make in English. Did your pupils know that animals speak other languages too?

Introduce some sounds and ask pupils to match them to the animal. This is also a good exercise in reviewing phonics if you use the written word.

You could compare the sounds that animals make in a variety of languages using some of the interesting infographics that are available online by James Chapman at [soundimals.com](http://soundimals.com).

Revisit activity one and add a layer of animal sounds to add texture, and a tune to accompany the rhythm of the words. Encourage children to think of the pitch of the animal sound – whether it's high (*alto*) or low (*bajo*), strong (*fuerte*) or soft (*suave*).

*Lisa Stevens is a primary languages educator and consultant who teaches at two Birmingham primary schools. She has consulted on various projects including the BBC Schools Radio series ¡Mi Madrid! for KS2 Spanish learners.*

## EXTENDING THE LESSON

- Record your 'Sinfonia de animales' and share with the school and wider community.
- Use the story *Dear Zoo/ Querido Zoo* to extend work on animals. Pupils could rewrite the story using their own animals and adjectives.
- Use reference materials to increase the number of adjectives available to describe the animals.
- Further exploit links with music – explore rhythm with other vocabulary or, for a greater challenge, pupils could create a rap about animals.
- Create hybrid animals – pupils could draw them, use cut up images of animals or even use an app like [switchzoo.com](http://switchzoo.com) – then describe them, taking into consideration their new hybrid personalities.

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- How can we further link languages to other areas of the curriculum?
- Is it important to discuss adjectival agreement in this lesson? For example *la pieza/la música* are both feminine so adjectives ending in –o would now end in –a, such as *aburrida* for boring, but if used to describe an elephant it would be *aburrido*.
- Are there other pieces of music that could be used in this way? For example, *Peter and the Wolf*?
- Could using a variety of music from Spain and the Hispanic world be used as incidental music in the classroom as a way in to discussion about culture and diversity?

## Free online resources

Download our free set of resources to help you deliver this lesson from [tinyurl.com/tpsaintsaens](http://tinyurl.com/tpsaintsaens)

DOWNLOAD RESOURCES AT



TEACHWIRE.NET

¿Qué dicen los animales?			
El animal	El sonido	Dibuja el animal	
El león	grugrrrr		
El elefante	blablablá		
El burro	co-co		
	plá plá		
La vaca	coo co co coo		
La oveja	meuu		
El puerco			
El gallo	co co	El puerco	coo coo
El conejo	meuu	El gallo	co co



Youtube, be sure not to reveal the names of the pieces as you want pupils to guess which animal the music represents. The version at [tinyurl.com/tpanimales](http://tinyurl.com/tpanimales) has nice images but again, hide them! Pupils can give reasons in English. You

could provide a simple grid for learners to compete with the name of the animal and a space to draw a face to show they like the piece or not.

Introduce phrases for likes and dislikes – *me gusta (mucho)/ no me gusta (nada)*. If doing