



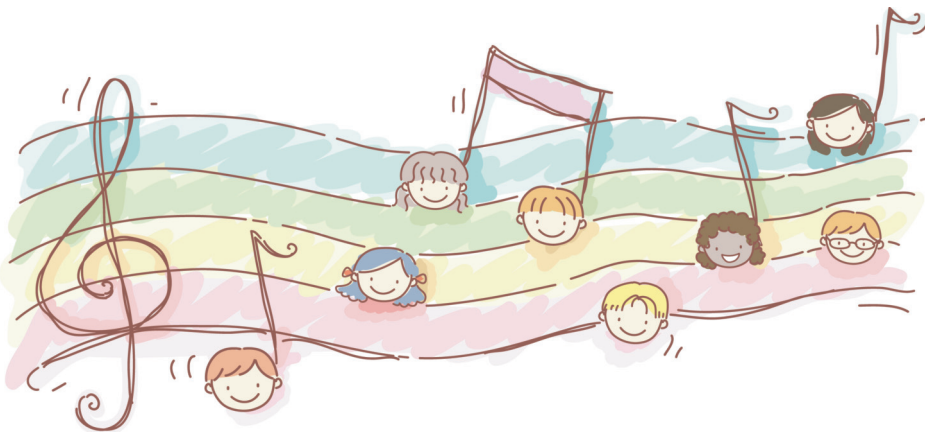
# Singing Sums

There are lots of rhymes to develop number learning, but **Sam Dixon** has five imaginative ideas you may not have tried to link maths and music...

## After 10...

This activity uses the song 'The Numbers after Ten', which can be found on the *Teach Nursery* website. Let the children listen to the song, then break it into a 'question and answer' format, so that the teacher sings the first part of each phrase and the children answer with the relevant number. Eventually the children should be able to join in with the whole song.

'The Numbers after Ten' can be used to play a game I call 'The Number Get Together'. Print out a set of number cards (also freely available online) so that the children can visualise each number as it appears in the song. Give one child the number card that represents the 10 unit and nine children the other single digits number cards. As the song is sung, the child with the initial '1' (tens unit) must find the right partner to make the number 11, 12, 13, and so on. The children who are watching should begin to see how the double digit number is formed, using the initial 10, plus the number that follows it.



## Sound stepping stones

- Make some card stepping stones that each have one number written on them, from 1–20. Lay them on the floor in a random pattern.
- Play some recorded music for the children to dance around to. When the music stops they must all jump onto a stepping stone.
- Ask individual children what number they have landed on and to play that many sounds on a percussion instrument.
- Vary the music and demonstrate how the children can move in different ways to reflect fast, slow, jerky, smooth, happy or sad.



“**Using a keyboard, ask the children to sing an ascending scale of notes, singing numbers as they go. To get to 20 is impossible, but trying is a lot of fun. Remember to start really low!**”

## Instrument carry on

Select two types of percussion instrument. Give half the class one type (say, a shaker), and another child a different one (perhaps a tambourine). Ask those with shakers to shake their instrument 10 times, counting as they go. Then ask the person with the tambourine to carry on up to a given number (e.g. 15). They must play five more sounds on the tambourine. This makes a clear distinction between 10 and 5, to make 15 sounds altogether.

## Waltz or march?

### FEEL THE BEAT

Explain that some music is good to march to. Play some marching music counting “1, 2, 3, 4” and calling “left, right, left, right!” ‘The Imperial March’ from *Star Wars*, John Philip Sousa’s ‘March’, and ‘The British Grenadiers’ are all good examples.

### LET'S DANCE

Explain that other music is good for dancing: for example, a special dance called the waltz. To dance the waltz you have to be good at counting to three. Use one of the children as a partner and stand opposite each other holding hands. As the music plays, demonstrate how he/she can step and sway from left to right, counting to three on each side. Use recorded music with a steady beat, e.g. Dimitri Shostakovich’s ‘Waltz No.2’ or a Valse Musette on Accordion. Say “Bom cha cha, Bom cha cha” and count in time with the music as you dance.

### WHICH IS WHICH?

Tell the children that you are going to choose a march or a waltz and they must listen and decide which it is. When the music starts again they join in by either marching or waltzing round the room.



Want more early years songs? The backing track for ‘The Numbers After Ten’ and other fun songs can be found at [songchest.com](http://songchest.com). For music specialist training, visit [teachmusicbrighton.co.uk](http://teachmusicbrighton.co.uk)