

# JUST A SONG IN MY HEAD

## Story Synopsis

In *Just a Song in My Head*, Little Mouse is inspired by the sounds he hears on his way to school. He hears his father whistling, the birds singing, the cars humming, and the train whistling. These sounds combine to make a song in Little Mouse's head. Little Mouse hums his new song and passes it on to Turtle, who whistles the song and passes it on to Rabbit. Rabbit sings the song and passes it on to Squirrel, who whispers the song and passes it on to Beaver. Soon everyone in the schoolyard is singing the same catchy tune! The principal requests quiet, but by then the song is caught in her head, too. She ends up singing and playing it herself. *Just a Song in My Head* suggests that a melody "heard" in the head can be expressed in a variety of ways.

## LITERACY ELEMENTS

dialogue (one character interacting verbally with another)

sequence (from Little Mouse's house to the school)

## CONNECTIONS

### VISUAL ARTS

producing two-dimensional works of art

### DRAMA/DANCE

demonstrating some basic elements of drama

## WORDS TO DISCOVER

father  
Mouse  
Turtle  
Squirrel  
Beaver  
head  
song  
just

## ESL CONSIDERATIONS

Provide students with opportunities to learn the meanings of the action words, e.g., *whispered*, *whispering*, *singing*, *marched*.

## Overall Learning Opportunities

- ♪ Students will:
  - demonstrate an understanding of the basic elements of music specified for this grade
  - communicate their response to music in ways appropriate to this grade
  - create and present expressive products in the arts
- Ⓐ
Ⓑ
Ⓒ Students will:
  - read a variety of simple written materials for different purposes
  - understand the vocabulary and language structures appropriate for this grade level
  - communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly
  - interact with sensitivity and respect

## ACTIVITY MENU

**Exploration: Our First Musical**, page 48

**Guided Reading**, pages 49–50

**As a Group**, pages 51–52

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  - *Song in Our Heads*: singing "Bingo," substituting rhythmic clapping for words
  - *Environmental Sounds*: identifying sounds in the classroom and creating "found" instruments
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  - *Words that "Do"*: identifying action verbs
  - *Who? What? When? Where?*: answering riddles to demonstrate understanding of the story

**Independent Work**, pages 53–55

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  - *BLM 19*: identifying environmental sounds
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  - *BLM 20*: reinforcing understanding of the story and of character interactions
  - *BLM 21*: putting story details in order



# Our First Musical

## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students will:

- create and perform musical compositions
- describe their responses to music
- demonstrate an awareness of melodic concepts

## YOU WILL NEED

- a familiar song (see Grade 1 Audio CD Tracks 2, 5, 7, 9)
- a variety of simple or “found” musical instruments

## OBSERVING FOR ASSESSMENT

Does the student:

- work collaboratively to practise a song?
- actively contribute to music making?

## TEACHING tip

Be sure to place the emphasis on experimenting

with different ways of making music rather than on “perfecting” the performance. Encourage students to take risks and have fun.

## Reading the Story

Review how the different characters in *Just a Song in My Head* make music. Turn to page 6. Ask:

- What word tells us what sound Little Mouse is making?

Ask a volunteer to demonstrate humming.

Follow the same procedure for pages 7, 9, and 11. (You might also listen to *Grade 1 Audio CD Track 28*, which contains different examples of vocal sounds.)

Draw the children’s attention to the “found” instruments in the illustrations.

Turn to page 5. Ask:

- What is Little Mouse carrying? How could he use the lunch box to make music?

Repeat for pages 7 (suspenders), 9 (Frisbee), 11 (acorn caps), 13 (sticks).

## Starting the Exploration

Play a piece of music that will be familiar to most children or is easy to learn, such as “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” (see *Grade 1 Audio CD Track 2*) or “Rockabye Baby” (see *Grade 1 Audio CD Track 9*).

Brainstorm some different ways that the children could perform the song, such as by singing it, singing it in syllables (“la la la”), whistling it, humming it, saying it as a rap, playing the rhythm on “found” instruments.

Choose one of the ways and practise the song together.

## Working on the Song

Introduce the term *musical* — a play that includes singing and other music. Explain to the children that they are going to perform *Just a Song in My Head* as a musical. Ask them to pretend that the familiar song they’ve been learning is the song in Little Mouse’s head.

Divide the class into groups, one for each character (Little Mouse, Turtle, Rabbit, and so on.) Each group should choose one way of performing the song and then practise it. It is not necessary for any group to try to imitate its character; e.g., the Turtle group doesn’t have to whistle. Give the groups time to explore different ways of making music and to choose one way they prefer. Methods might include such techniques as clapping or playing a drum. Circulate among the groups to help them choose and practise.

## Sharing

Arrange the groups in the proper sequence (Little Mouse, Turtle, Rabbit, and so on), and then perform the musical. As the narrator, begin the musical by reading to the end of page 5. In sequence, each group should perform the song. When Beaver group is finished, invite all the groups to sing/play at the same time (for the schoolyard scene). Enjoy the racket!

Conclude the activity by inviting the children to tell what was fun and what was difficult about the performance.

## Extension

Perform the musical again, but introduce the idea of dynamics. Taking the role of conductor, teach the children to sing/play louder or softer in response to your hand gestures. Demonstrate how the technique of having your hand rise with your palms up means “get louder,” and that your hands sinking with your palms down means “get softer.” Use these gestures throughout the musical, especially in order to bring the volume down at the end of the schoolyard scene.

This Exploration works well with Stand-Alone Activity 17: “Our Voices” on page 137.

## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students will:

- use their knowledge and experience to understand what they read
- predict what may happen next in a story and revise or confirm predictions
- contribute to small- and large-group interactions

## YOU WILL NEED

- chart paper and marker

## TEACHING tip

Print the words *whispering*, *singing*, *humming*, and *whistling* on chart paper. To anchor the words as sight vocabulary, point to each at different times during the instruction and have the children call out the word or use sounds to represent its meaning.

## Setting the Scene

Ask the children:

- What's your favourite song?
- Would you like to sing it for us?

After the child sings the song (with help, if necessary), ask:

- What do you like most about this song?

When several children have had the opportunity to share their favourite songs, show the cover of the book and say:

- The title of this story is *Just a Song in My Head*.

Ask:

- Have you ever had a song in your head?

Talk about what it means to "have a song in your head." Then say:

- I'm going to put one there right now. Are you ready?

Hum or sing (using a comfortable syllable such as *la la*) a song that's familiar to you and the children (e.g., the melody to "Happy Birthday" or "If You're Happy and You Know It"). Repeat as many times as necessary to "put the song in the children's heads." As the children look at the cover illustration, tell them that the song begins in Little Mouse's head, but doesn't stay there for long. Ask:

- Can you guess which animal Little Mouse passes the song to? Yes, that's right. He passes it to Turtle. Let's open the book to page 2 and find out how that happened.

## Reading the Text

Say:

- Look at the picture. Little Mouse is going to school and is saying goodbye to his father. His father whispers "Goodbye" to Little Mouse.

- Look at the picture on page 3. Little Mouse heard his father whispering. He heard something else, too. Read these two pages to find out what else he heard.

Turn to page 4. Say:

- Little Mouse heard the cars humming. Look at the picture. What sound did Little Mouse hear coming from the cars? Yes. He heard *hmmmm*. Let me hear you make that sound. Good for you!
- He heard the train whistling. Look at the picture on page 5. What sound did the train whistle? That's right, *toot toot*.
- Read pages 4 and 5 to find out what these sounds did in Little Mouse's head.

Turn to page 6. Say:

- Who remembers what we thought Little Mouse would do with his song? That's right. We thought he'd give the song to Turtle. Read these pages to find out if he did.

Turn to page 8. Ask:

- Who is the new character we meet on this page? That's right, it's Rabbit. And Rabbit is asking Turtle what he's whistling. Turtle answers, "Just a song in my head." What do you think Rabbit does with the song? Read these pages to find out.

Continue with this pattern of asking and explaining through the end of page 13. Then say:

- Turn to page 14. Where is everyone now? That's right, they're at school. How do you know? Put your finger on the word that spells *school* as I say the letters: s-c-h-o-o-l, school. Now put your finger on the principal who's standing beneath the word *school*.

Say:

- The principal is asking what all the noise is. And they all say it's a song they can't get out of their heads. Can you see all the music in the air?

## OBSERVING FOR ASSESSMENT

During independent reading, observe and make note of specific reading behaviours. Does the student:

- show an interest in reading the book independently?
- finger-point to track and self-monitor?
- appear to use the illustrations to page-match?

- Read these two pages to find out what they did with the song.

Ask:

- What do you think we'll see in the picture on the last page?

Encourage the children to predict and then say:

- Turn to page 16 to find out what happened.

Ask:

- Were we right?

## Independent Reading

Have the children read the book on their own with as little assistance as possible.

## After Reading

Engage the children in conversation. Ask:

- Who remembers how Little Mouse got a song in his head in the first place?
- At the end of the story, who had the song in her head?

## Revisit the Story

Discuss the story, using open-ended prompts. Ask:

- What did you enjoy most about the story? Why?
- Do you have a favourite picture? Which one is it?
- If you got a song in your head and you couldn't get it out, what would you do?

Encourage a range of responses.

Have the children retrieve specific information from the story.

Say:

- Find all the animals that were left with the song in their heads. Start with Little Mouse. Tell me who was next and I'll make a list.

On chart paper, make a numbered list, in order, of the characters who were given the song (1. Little Mouse; 2. Turtle; 3. Rabbit; 4. Squirrel; 5. Beaver; 6. the principal). Then ask questions such as:

- Which character was third to be left with the song? last? fourth? first?
- Which character has a name that begins with the letter R? the letter T? the letter S? (and so on)
- Which character has a name that starts like r-r-r-un? like buh-ig? like s-s-s-un? (and so on)

Use **BLM 20** to reinforce the various character interactions.



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## Reinforce the Story

Pair the children and have them practise reading the story by reading to each other. They could:

- read chorally, in pairs
- read alternate pages
- read alternate pages up to the centre spread and then switch, so that each child has an opportunity to read both patterns.

To give the children additional reading practice, have them complete **BLM 21**, which requires them to read, select, cut, and glue. When they've completed the BLM, invite them to read the sentences to their reading partners and to take them home to read to their families.



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# As a Group

## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students will:

- sing expressively
- create rhythmic patterns
- explore songs and games

## YOU WILL NEED

- a recording of the children's song "Bingo" (see Grade 1 Audio CD Track 7)

## OBSERVING FOR ASSESSMENT

Does the student:

- demonstrate an understanding of pitch?
- demonstrate an understanding of rhythm by clapping?

## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students will:

- identify sounds in their classroom environment
- contribute to activities that explore creative use of sound sources

## YOU WILL NEED

- several clipboards and pencils
- various objects for "found" instruments

## Activity: Song in Our Heads

Say:

- Little Mouse and the other characters heard a song in their heads. Close your eyes and try to hear a song in *your* head. What song do you hear?

Ask each child to respond.

Say:

- There's a song that's fun to sing, but we have to learn how to hear it in our heads. It's called "Bingo."

Write the words to the first stanza and the chorus of "Bingo" on chart paper:

There was a farmer had a dog,  
And Bingo was his name-o.  
B-I-N-G-O,  
B-I-N-G-O,  
B-I-N-G-O,  
And Bingo was his name-o!

Play the song for the class until the children understand how to substitute claps for letters as the song is repeated. (See Grade 1 Audio CD Track 7.) Tell them to sing the letter(s) in their heads while they clap so they know where they are in the song. Perform the song as a class, without accompaniment.

## Extension

Introduce an action song such as "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes." Teach the children the actions that accompany the song. Then create another "song-in-your-head" clapping game: perform the song by pointing and clapping instead of singing the words. For the last line of the song, encourage children to simultaneously sing, clap, and do the actions.

This Extension works well with Stand-Alone Activity 16: "Beats and Patterns" on page 136.

## Activity: Environmental Sounds

Ask a volunteer to use her or his voice to demonstrate what a car sounds like. Have another volunteer do the same.

Turn to page 4 of *Just a Song in My Head*. Say:

- Look at the picture. What letters in it show the sound a car makes? (hmmmmm) What would those letters sound like?

Ask the children to look around the classroom and point to objects that could make a sound (e.g., door, light switch). Together, brainstorm a word or letters that could represent that sound (e.g., "click" for light switch). Work together to invent a "found" instrument that could represent that sound; e.g., two sticks rapped together.

Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a clipboard, a pencil, and a copy of **BLM 19**. Have the groups explore their environment to identify one object that makes a sound, to think of a word or letters to represent the sound, and to invent a found instrument that will make the sound. Students should use **BLM 19** to record their ideas.

Have groups share their findings and demonstrate their instruments.

## Extension

As a class, create a story or poem that incorporates the children's found sounds and instruments. Help the students develop a dramatization of the story, including sound effects.



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## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students will:

- use some features of written text to determine content
- correctly spell words identified by the teacher

## YOU WILL NEED

- chart paper and marker

## OBSERVING FOR ASSESSMENT

Can the student:

- follow basic instructions and directions?
- identify words that denote action?

## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students will:

- reread all or parts of a written piece to clarify their understanding of its meaning
- ask and respond to questions

## YOU WILL NEED

- strips of chart paper or Bristol board, marker
- a riddle box

## OBSERVING FOR ASSESSMENT

Can the student:

- use intonation to communicate ideas?
- allow others to speak, and wait their turn?

## Activity: Words That “Do”

*Just a Song in My Head* has several action verbs. Some of these verbs describe the sound each character makes (e.g., *whisper*, *sing*), and some describe each character’s actions (e.g., *walked*, *marched*).

Invite the children to read through the story with you page by page, beginning on page 5, looking for the various “doing” words. Have them dictate the words, and list them on chart paper.

To help the children find the “doing” words, ask questions such as:

- When the sounds made a song in Little Mouse’s head, what did he do with it? Find the answer on page 5. (hummed)

Ask the children to spell the words as you record them.

hummed	hopped
marched	whisper
whistle	ran
walked	sing
sing	called

## Extension

Invite the children to look at the list on the chart and to mentally choose one of the words. Have each “do” the action, while the other children guess what it is. Ask the child who guesses the correct word to point to it on the chart.

## Activity: Who? What? When? Where?

Ask the children to sit in a circle around a riddle box in which you’ve placed several riddles about the story. In turn, invite each child to: take a riddle from the box, open it, read it to her- or himself, read it to the group, and invite guesses. Ask the children to refer to the book to confirm the riddles.

Write the riddles on chart paper strips or on strips of Bristol board, and place them, either upside-down or folded, into the riddle box.

Sample riddles:

- Who heard the birds singing?
- What did Little Mouse hear whistling?
- When Turtle got the song, what did he do?
- Where did Squirrel leave the song?

## Extension

Invite the children to review the story in order to create more riddles. You may wish to extend the question words to include *how* and *why*.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

## Sounds in Our Classroom

1. Something that makes a sound in our classroom is

\_\_\_\_\_

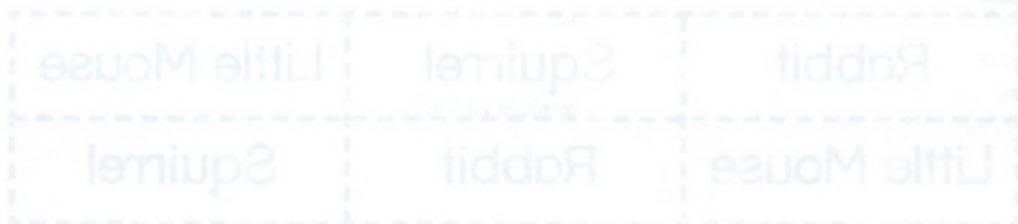
2. It makes a sound like this: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The musical instrument we invented looks like this:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Just a Song in My Head

BLM 20

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

**Cut and paste.**

1. Who gave the song to Turtle? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Who gave the song to Beaver? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who did Rabbit give the song to? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Who had the song before Squirrel? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Who had the song after Turtle? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Who gave the song to the principal? \_\_\_\_\_



Rabbit	Squirrel	Little Mouse
Little Mouse	Rabbit	Squirrel



My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

Find the missing word, cut it out, and glue it.

Read the sentence.

1. "I'm going to \_\_\_\_\_ now," said Little Mouse.
2. He heard the birds \_\_\_\_\_.
3. He heard the train \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The sounds made a \_\_\_\_\_ in Little Mouse's head.
5. He left the song in Turtle's \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Little Mouse left \_\_\_\_\_ song in the principal's head.
7. "Now I can't get this song \_\_\_\_\_ of my head!"

school    whistling    singing    head

out    song    the