Zara’s Musical Soundscapes

Learning objective: To understand how to use graphic notation to represent musical elements such as pitch, duration, and dynamics.

Zara the Zebra sees patterns in everything! Today, she is composing a piece of music based on the sounds of a forest. Use the symbols in the word bank and your own creative shapes to 'draw' a short musical composition. Think about how high or low your sounds are (pitch) and how long they last (duration).

Draw: Draw a graphic score on the provided space. Use a horizontal line as your 'timeline'. Above the line, draw shapes that represent sounds. Use large, bold shapes for loud, long notes and small, tiny dots or dashes for quiet, staccato notes. Use a variety of colours to represent different instruments, such as a deep blue for a low-pitched drum and a bright yellow for a high-pitched flute melody.

Label words: Pitch (High/Low) · Duration (Long/Short) · Dynamics (Loud/Quiet) · Tempo (Fast/Slow) · Crescendo · Staccato

Steps:

1. Explain how you have used your drawing to represent a 'loud' sound versus a 'quiet' sound.
2. If you wanted to show a sound that gets faster and louder (a crescendo), what shape would you draw?
3. Why might a composer choose to use graphic notation instead of standard musical notes?

4. Label your drawing with at least three terms from the word bank to show the musical features of your composition.

5. How does the 'duration' of your shapes change from the start of your drawing to the end?