

Music Blocks Lesson plan

Exploring Flamenco Compás

Age:

8-13

Number of students:

Up to 10.

Rationale:

Students will learn more about the rhythms of Flamenco, while working within a geometrical framework of twelve (i.e. like a clock). Students will create their own melodies to fit within the rhythm to create something fun and unique to them.

Objectives:

Students will understand the cyclical (repetitive) nature of rhythm through flamenco Compás, which is built upon simple yet satisfying patterns within twelve. Students will finish the project having created their own melodies, while having reinforced flamenco rhythmic patterns, both aurally and visually.

Lesson

Introduction:

Have the students watch a performance of Flamenco dancers with clapping. The following video is a good choice: <https://invidious.private.coffee/watch?v=nbMDH3-IBqM>

Live flamenco performance, recorded in Madrid, Spain

Before playing the video tell students that they will be watching a video about flamenco and that they should observe closely, that they will be asked to share their observations when they are done watching the video.

When the video is finished**, ask students to share their observations. Key words to be looking for are clapping, dancing, shoes, participation by many in the crowd, and the names of the instruments. Other observations are welcome as well.

***The video above is twenty minutes. At the six minute and forty-five second mark, the singing comes back in. This would be a good time to stop the video for the sake of time.*

Review:

Start with a review of rhythm, beat, and pulse. Ask the students to tell you what is the difference between a rhythm, a beat, and a pulse. Ask the students to perform a steady, let's say, eighth-note pulse. Ask another student to emphasize a, let's say, quarter-note beat on top of that pulse. Finally, you can have a third student improvise rhythms on top of the beat and pulse, asking them to land within the pulse — and they may phase in and out of the beat (i.e. to emphasize strong beats and weak beats).

Part 1:

A. Clap rhythms in a circle

1. Begin by bringing the kids into a space large enough where they can stand and move a little bit. Ask the students to stand in a circle.
2. Start clapping one of the flamenco rhythms, such as the Bulerías, which has a strong beat at the first of the following groupings: 3 + 3 + 2 + 2 + 2; for a total of twelve beats.
3. Ask students to repeat the pattern by ear, listening to you and performing the pattern back. Have the students perform the pattern back as a group in call and response to you, and then ask the students to perform the pattern back one by one. Ask them to count the rhythm out loud as: One two three, One two three, One two, One two, One two. Have the students perform both as a group and as individuals.

B. Draw the rhythm on the whiteboard

1. Draw a circle on the whiteboard. Tell students that they will be writing the rhythm on that circle.
2. Ask students how many pulses we had total, how many counts we did before repeating the pattern. Each number counted counts as a pulse, so $3+3+2+2+2$ is twelve, giving us twelve total pulses. Tell students that, because we have twelve pulses, we will divide the circle into twelve equal parts. Draw lines through the circle such that it divides it into twelve equal divisions, like a clock.



3. Next, give each pulse a number, with the same mapping as you would for a clock, such that the top is twelve. After you do this, ask the students to find the strong beats for the Bulerías rhythm. They should end up on 12, 3, 6, 8, and 10.
4. Ask the students to once again perform the rhythm, reading the clock this time.

Break

Part 2:

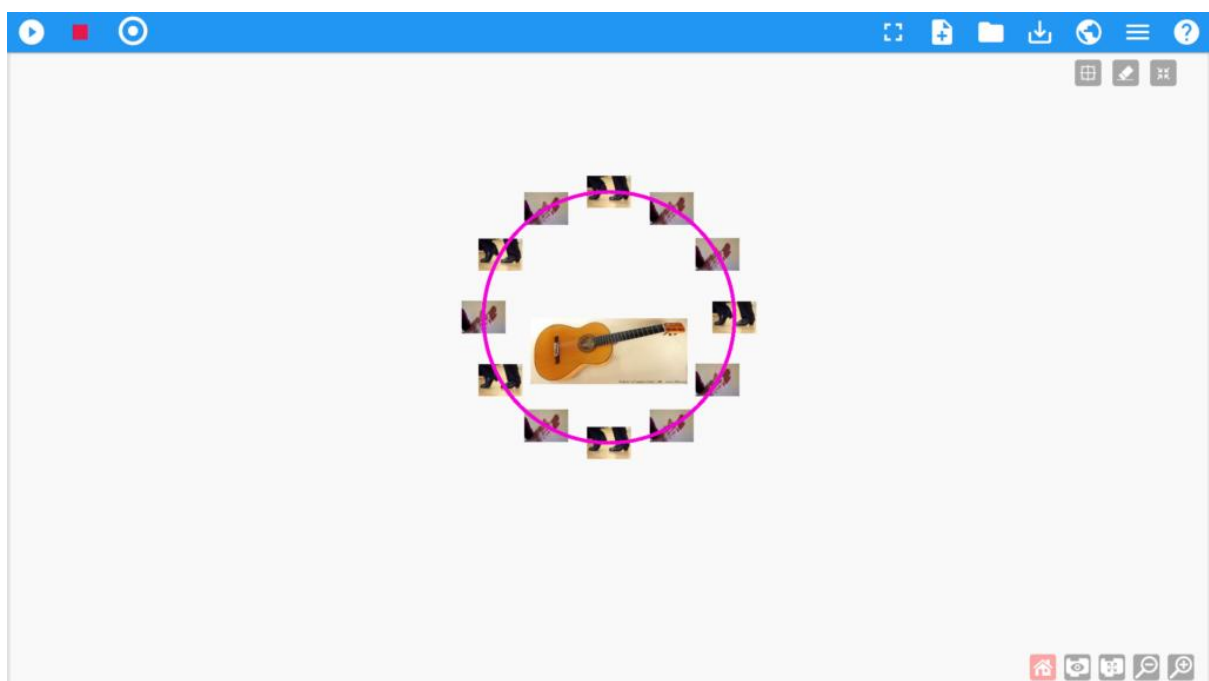
A. Transcribe the Bulerías rhythm in Music Blocks

1. Move students to the computers. Ask the students to start from the following project, titled “Compas rhythm with guitar”: <https://musicblocks.sugarlabs.org/index.html?id=1722004700244305&run=True>



This is what the program looks like when you open it.

2. Ask students to recreate the Bulerías rhythm by clicking on the images in a circle (i.e. the hand claps) to change them to create strong beats, indicated by images of “dancing flamenco shoes”.

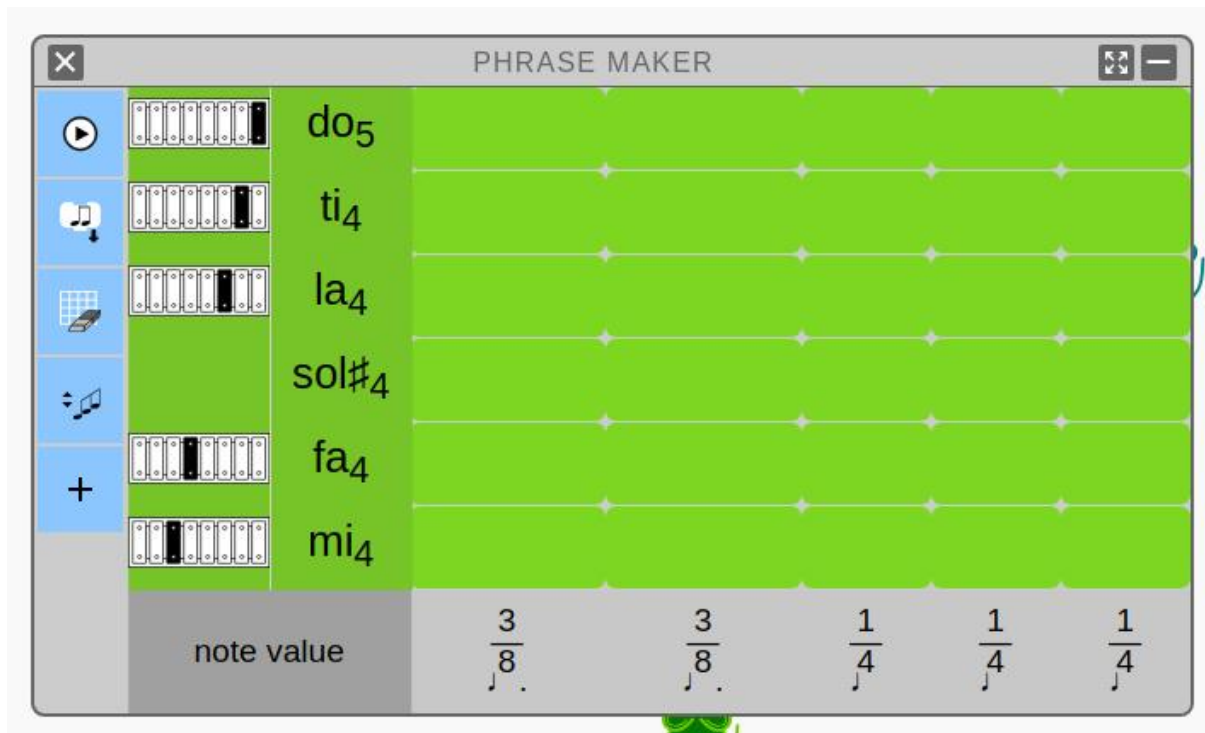


This is what the Bulerías rhythm looks like in the project.

Note: Every time you press play in Music Blocks, students will need to re-transcribe the Bulerías rhythm. This is not necessarily a bad thing as they will get more familiar with the pattern.

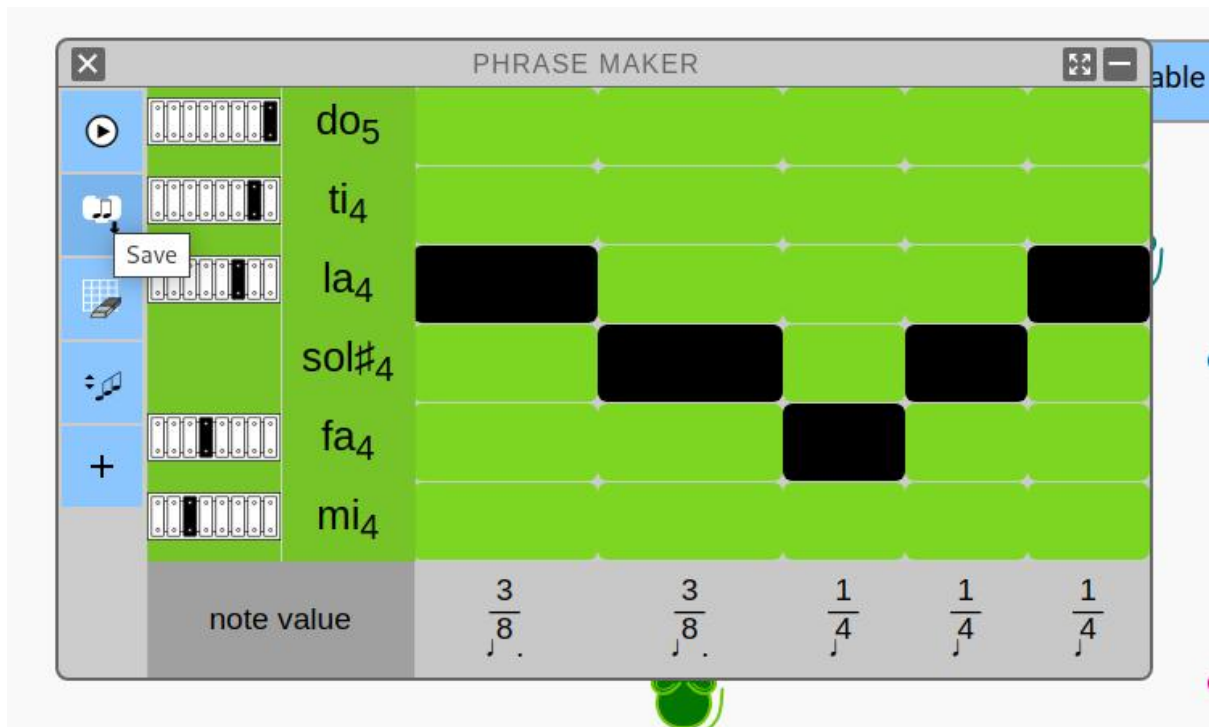
B. Creating melodies over Bulerías

1. Once students have explored this a little bit, and have successfully transcribed the rhythm, tell them that they can create new melodies to play over this rhythm. Tell them to open the Phrase Maker by clicking on it once.



This is what the Phrase Maker looks like once initiated

2. Tell the students that, once they have a melody that they like, they can export their melody by clicking "save" within the Phrase Maker widget. This will create a new action block that they can use in place of the current action block.

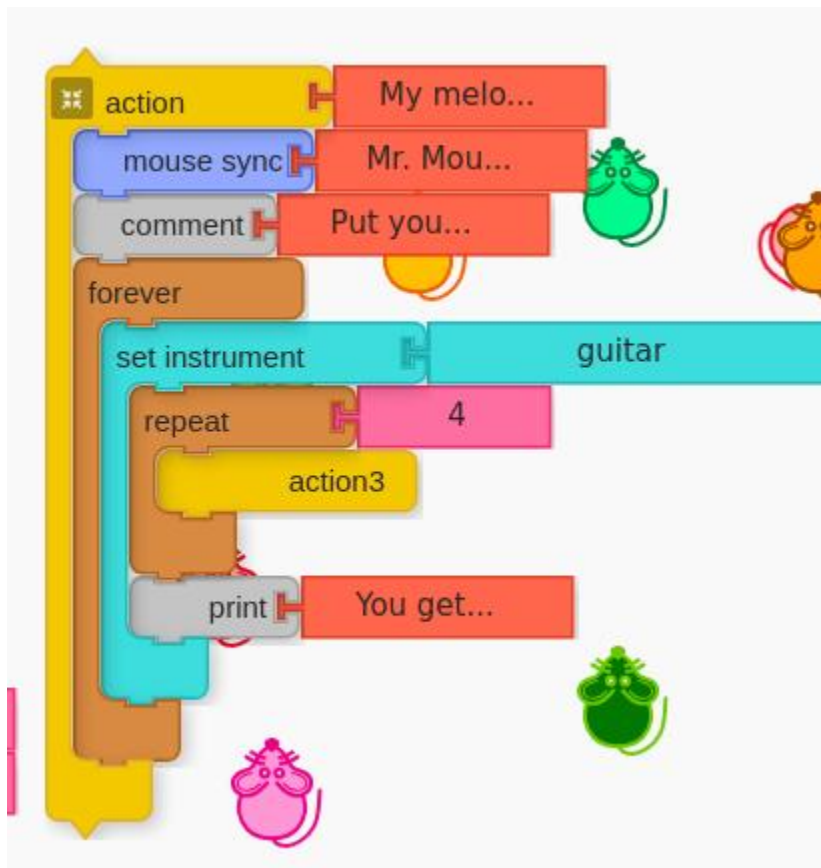


Click the save button on the menu at the left.

3. Tell students to put their new action block into the action called "My melody", which is what the guitar plays. This action is called from the "My melody" Start block that has a guitar avatar. The action goes within a the Set Instrument block set to Guitar.



New action blocks will be generated in the Action palette

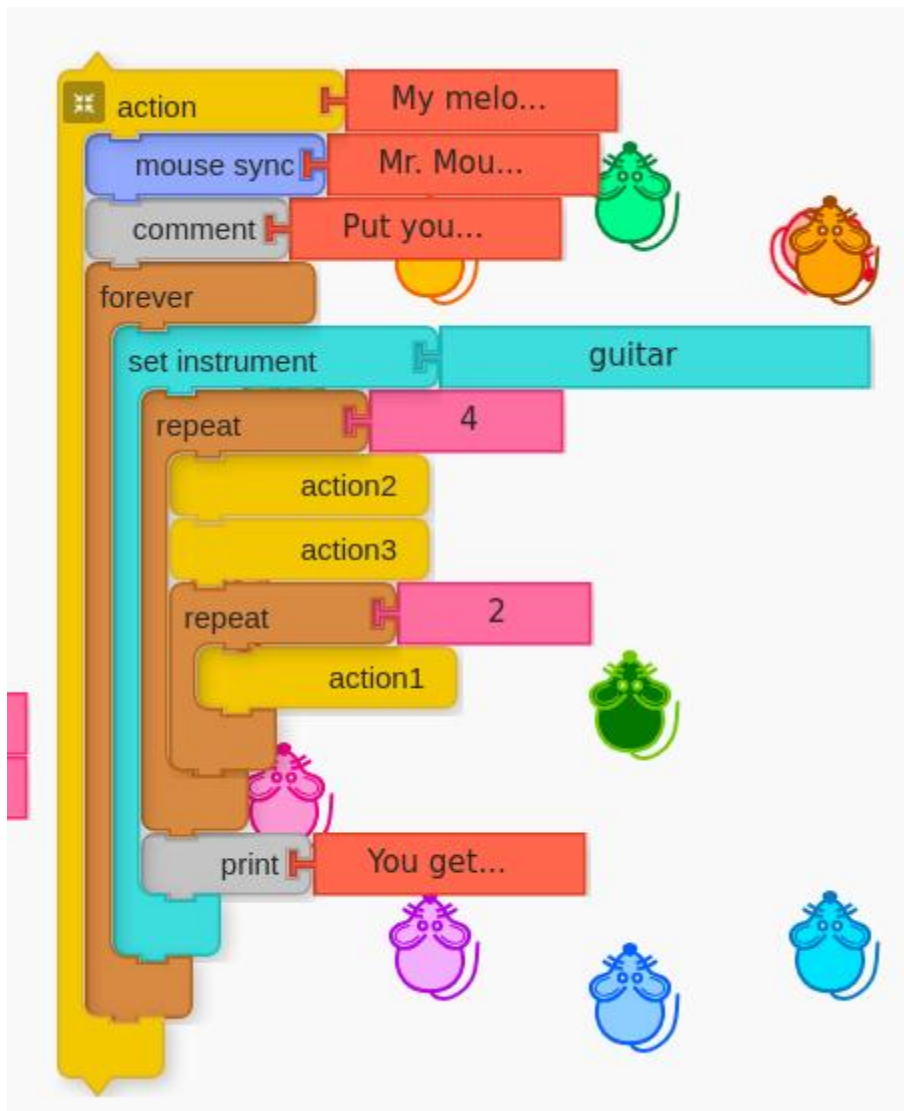


Insert your new action block

into this part of the code.

C. Create additional action blocks from Phrase Maker to make more varied and longer melodies

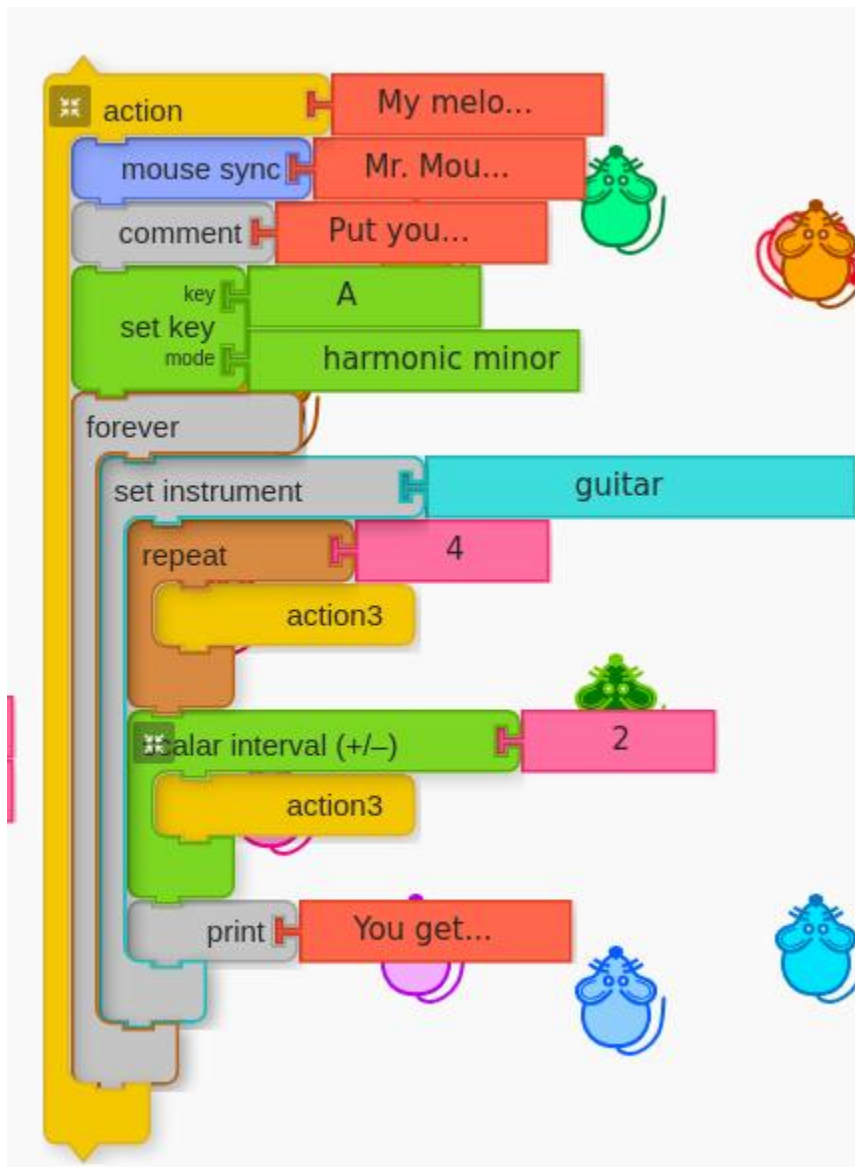
1. Tell students to continue creating actions to create more interesting melodic patterns. They can put their melodies in various orders, repeating different action blocks in interesting ways.



Create more action

blocks and string them together to create different melodic phrases.

2. Students may also try other things, such as using Scalar Interval to play some of the melodies in thirds. Just note that, if you do this, you will need to use the set key block to keep the intervals in the mode of A harmonic minor.



Add Set Key/Mode and

Scalar Interval blocks for variety.

Assessment:

1. Observe participation and clapping.
2. Did the students create the Bulerías rhythm?
- 3 Do students understand how to map the beats onto the clock? (e.g. Can they detect errors, etc.)
4. Did students create their own melodies?

Resources:

1. Flamenco performance with clapping and dancing: <https://invidious.private.coffee/watch?v=nbMDH3-lBqM>
2. Information about Bulerías: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buler%C3%ADas>
- 3 Flamenco rhythms in a clock representation: <https://invidious.private.coffee/watch?v=KlqwJs7BQJk>
4. Example video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmR5W1QYNn0&pp=ygUVbXVzaWMgYmxvY2tzlGZsYW1lbnNv> or <https://invidious.private.coffee/watch?v=nmR5W1QYNn0&pp=ygUVbXVzaWMgYmxvY2tzlGZsYW1lbnNv>

Project Link: <https://musicblocks.sugarlabs.org/index.html?id=1722004700244305&run=True>