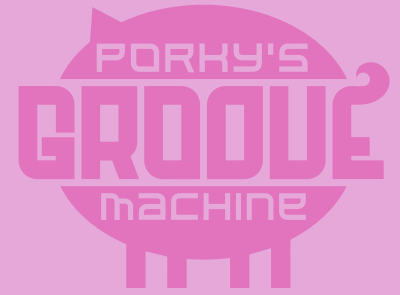


BUILDING A GROOVE

Sample Lesson Plan

Brought to you by:



Warm Up

Blast some funk on the speakers as your students enter the classroom! Get them dancing, or leave the music playing while you warm up the class on a scale of the same key.

Introduce the Pentatonic Scale

Explain that funk, as well as many other genres of music, heavily utilizes the pentatonic scale. Through call and response, teach the scale using voices or instruments.

If the groove you will be deconstructing is in a minor key, the pentatonic scale will include scale degrees 1, b3, 4, 5, and b7.



C E \flat F G B \flat C

If the groove you will be deconstructing is in a major key, the pentatonic scale will include scale degrees 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6.



C D E G A C

Deconstruct the Groove

Take a moment for the students to listen to your chosen funk example. Ask them to identify the instruments they hear. “Is that a guitar? Or a banjo?” “Hear that nasty baritone sax?!”

Then, identify the instruments one by one and explain their function in the groove. Choose a short segment of the music where the instruments are fulfilling their typical function in the groove. Demonstrate each part and have the students repeat the parts on in their own ranges and with their own voices/instruments/bodies.

Bass: The rhythmic and harmonic foundation that the groove is built upon.

Drumset: Defines the rhythmic structure that the melodic instruments can work around.

Guitar: Adds rhythmic and harmonic reinforcement, fills in the spaces left by the bass and drum set.

Horns/Vocals: Provide the melodic content of the song, the catchy hook that makes a song memorable, and the background lines.

Reconstruct the Groove

Designate (or have students choose) who will cover each of the instrumental roles. In the same order (Bass, Drum set, Guitar, Horns/Vocals), layer in the parts that you taught while deconstructing the groove. Try again with every student on a different part.

Further Grooving: Improvisation

Starting with the bassline and adding role by role, have students develop and layer their own groove, using notes from the pentatonic scale.

Students can also improvise solos to play over the groove, using the notes of the pentatonic scale!

Artists and Tracks to Reference

Great Funk Songs to Deconstruct:

Flashlight, by Parliament

Uptown Funk, by Bruno Mars

Historically Important Funk Artists:

George Clinton

Parliament/Funkadelic

James Brown

Earth, Wind & Fire

Prince

Stevie Wonder

Maceo Parker

Funk Artists Popular Today:

Bruno Mars

Vulfpeck

Lettuce

Galactic

The Motet

Trombone Shorty

Funk Adjacent/Inspired:

Michael Jackson

Red Hot Chili Peppers

Historically Important/Popular Funk Songs:

Give Up the Funk, by Parliament/Funkadelic

September, by Earth, Wind & Fire

I Got You (I Feel Good), by James Brown

Questions?

Reach out to us at
connect@porkysgroovemachine.com

www.porkysgroovemachine.com