

Example Music Lessons - Color Orchestra

In this lesson series, students will become a Color Orchestra. They will work with Song Maker, resonator bars, and handbells from the music package, supplemented with Boomwhackers. The series consists of two lessons that you can divide into shorter sessions as needed:

Lesson 1: Experimenting with instruments and playing a song together as the Color Orchestra. In this lesson, we use Blinding Lights for group 7-8 as an example. This approach can also be adapted for other groups and applied to songs programmed in Song Maker.

Lesson 2: Discovering Song Maker (digital skills), composing, and playing original music as the Color Orchestra.

Tip: Is this still a bit of a challenge for you? Join a workshop at the learning hub in the 2025/2026 school year, or involve a music teacher through CultuurStation.

Lesson 1








Blinding Lights – Group 7-8

In this first lesson, students will learn to play the melody of Blinding Lights by The Weeknd!

The melody is divided into smaller sections for the students to practice individually. By gradually adding more sections, it becomes easier to play the entire melody.

Each section is programmed at the original tempo of 86 BPM, but feel free to start slower at 60 BPM and increase the tempo step by step. The tempo can be easily adjusted at the bottom of Song Maker.

The colors of the instruments correspond to the colors in Song Maker. For this song, you will need the following colors:

	= C# = Cis
	= D
	= E
	= F# = Fis
	= G
	= A
	= B

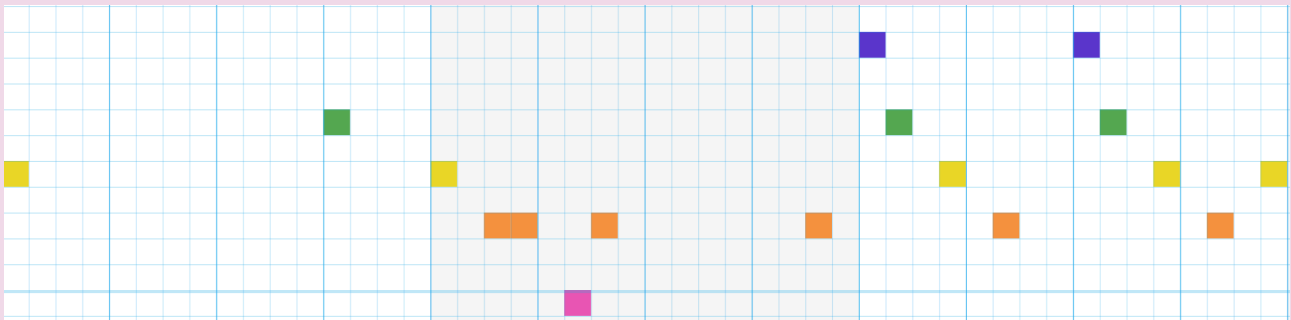
Each instrument has the notes clearly marked. Note that the C# and F# can only be played using Boomwhackers!

Start Lesson 1

Distribute the colors among the class. Some colors will appear more frequently than others—for example, the pink note B is only played once. Combine it with the blue/purple note A so that one student plays two notes. Make sure to pass the Boomwhackers calmly; otherwise, one might go flying across the classroom!

Melody 1

The melody below is the vocal melody of the chorus. Start by setting the melody to a slow tempo. Do the students recognize the melody? Have them play along, but only when their color is up. Once the slow tempo goes well, gradually increase the tempo.

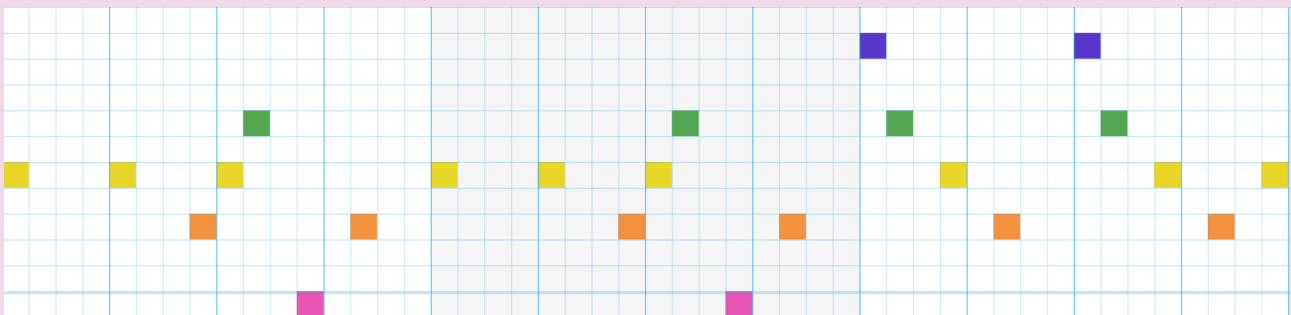


<https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/Song-Maker/song/5883661762822144>

Melody 2

Once the first melody is flowing smoothly and the tempo feels comfortable for the class (this could be the original tempo of 86 BPM, or slower or faster), introduce the second melody. This is the melody played by the synthesizer after the chorus and at the beginning of the song.

Practice this second melody separately first before combining parts 1 and 2. Start at a slow pace and gradually increase the tempo.



<https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/Song-Maker/song/4809609224781824>

Tip: Is the melody a bit too long or does something seem off at the beginning? Click on settings to shorten the melody. This way, you can repeat shorter sections with the class.

Note: If you shorten the melody, the trimmed section will be removed. To restore the original length, use the original link.

Combining Melody 1 and 2

Once both melodies are played smoothly, it's time to join them together. In the link below, the melodies are arranged consecutively, with each melody repeated twice:

[Link to Melody](#)

Want a fuller sound? Use this version with added chords for a richer sound. Students only play the top melody; the chords (combinations of three notes) are not played:

[Link to Melody with Chords](#)

Adjusting the sound: To get a sound closer to the original, switch the marimba instrument to a synth.

Practice tips for a successful lesson:

- Start slowly and build up the tempo gradually
- Repeat the melody several times before adjusting the speed; this helps students truly master it!
- Let students listen carefully first, and only then play along. After each tempo adjustment, take a moment to listen together before playing again.
- Can the students memorize the melody? Challenge them to play it with their eyes closed—a fun and engaging task!
- Push the students further: How fast can they play without making mistakes? Encourage them to try going faster than the original!

Deepening the Lesson

Would you like to take the lesson a step further? Add chord playing!

Chords consist of three notes played simultaneously, providing a beautiful foundation for the melody. Divide the class into four groups, each assigned a chord and a set of colors. Each chord has a unique sound due to the combination of colors. Suggestion: Have the students guess which chord their group is playing.

Blinding Lights consists of the following four chords:

Em (E minor)	=	E (yellow), G (dark green), B (pink)
Bm (B minor)	=	B (pink), D (orange), F# (green)
D (D major)	=	D (orange), F# (green), A (purple/blue)
A (A major)	=	A (purple/blue), C# (dark orange), E (yellow)

Playing Chords

The chords can be incorporated in different ways. Use them as a standalone activity. Or introduce an extra challenge where half the class plays chords and the other half plays the melody.

Under this link, the chords are noted on the first beat of the measure: [Chords on the first beat](#)

You can also play the chords on every beat: [Chords on every beat](#)

Or use them as accompaniment to the melody: [Chords as Accompaniment](#)

This is how you can integrate the chords into your lessons in different ways!

Lesson 2

In this lesson, students will create their own melody using [Song Maker from Chrome Experiments](#). Each student or group will need a laptop or tablet and headphones.

By exploring the program and experimenting with it, children develop their digital skills. As a teacher, you guide this process by occasionally discussing discoveries with the class, asking questions, or providing explanations.

A video lesson is available for teachers to familiarize themselves with Song Maker. This helps ensure effective guidance during students' experiments with the program. Although the video can be used in the classroom, it's recommended to let students explore the program independently.

Getting Started

Have students search for the website and open Song Maker on their laptops. Headphones can go on, and the experimenting begins!

Examples of Questions Teachers Can Ask:

- What have you discovered? And how did you figure that out?
- How can you erase a mistake?
- What's the difference between the bottom two rows and the ones above?
- Which instruments can you make play?
- What do you need to do to make the music play faster?

After Experimenting: Time to Create!

Now it's time for students to compose their own song or start by recreating one of the example songs. They can select their own notes, beats, sounds, and decide on the tempo. The result will surely be some creative and unique pieces!

Presenting the Created Melodies:

If you'd like to showcase the melodies, provide students with a few guidelines beforehand. This adds structure while leaving room for endless possibilities.

For example, you could suggest:

- Maximum Number of Colors or Notes
- Collaborating in Groups: work together to create, refine, and rehearse your melody
- Playing 3 Instruments of One Color Simultaneously
- Maximum Number of Bars

Deepening the Lesson

Does a student want to explore further? Maybe experiment with some extra notes or rhythms?

By default, Song Maker uses the following settings, which students can adjust via the settings menu:

- Length: 4 bars
- Beats per bar: 4 beats
- Scale: Major
- Range: 2 octaves

Citizenship

Have the students mastered these skills? Encourage them to create melodies inspired by other cultures or countries!

Exploring cultural music can help students develop global awareness and foster an appreciation for diversity. They can experiment with scales, rhythms, or instruments characteristic of specific traditions.

We wish the students lots of fun composing their own melody.