

**Chicken on a Fencepost**

Grade/Class	3rd-6th Grade	
Date		
<b>Primary Elemental Objective</b>	<b>Melody:</b> Read, sing, and play a melody using low <i>la</i> and low <i>so</i> .	
<b>Secondary Elemental Objectives</b>	<b>Rhythm:</b> Identify, read, sing, and play using sixteenth notes. <b>Harmony:</b> Perform a level drone between two instruments. <b>Harmony:</b> Improvise, compose, and perform a melodic ostinato.	
<b>National/State Standards</b>	<b>NAfME Standards:</b> 1. Singing 2. Playing 3. Improvising 4. Composing & Arranging 5. Reading & Notating 6. Listening, Analyzing, & Describing 7. Evaluating 8. Connecting to other Disciplines 9. History & Culture	<b>21st Century Skills:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity &amp; Innovation</li> <li>• Critical Thinking &amp; Problem Solving</li> <li>• Communication &amp; Collaboration</li> <li>• Flexibility &amp; Adaptability</li> <li>• Initiative &amp; Self-Direction</li> <li>• Social &amp; Cross-Cultural Skills</li> <li>• Production &amp; Accountability</li> <li>• Leadership &amp; Responsibility</li> </ul>
<b>Repertoire</b>	<h3>Chicken on a Fencepost</h3> <p>American Circle Game</p>	
<b>Media</b>	Singing Movement Speech	Body Percussion Barred Percussion

### *Chicken on a Fencepost*

**Process**  
**- Explore**  
**- Analyze**  
**- Create**  
**Assessment**

1. Ask the class to stand in a circle, holding hands. Everyone walks on the beat around the circle to the right (counterclockwise) while you sing the song *Chicken on a Fencepost*. On the last word, "Brown," all raise hands above heads, creating archways.
2. Take 1/3 to 1/2 the class and create a smaller circle inside the main circle, also holding hands. The inside circle should walk clockwise (left) while the outside circle continues counterclockwise (right). Repeat singing the song while the class practices this.
3. Next, assign just two players in each circle to create an archway, or "gate," in their wall. Everyone else should keep arms down at the end. When the song is over, walk through the two gates, and arrive at the center. Show the class a "chicken" (rubber chicken, guiro, or any other visible item).
4. Leave the chicken in the center, and select two "farmers" to play the game. The farmers close their eyes while you choose new gates, then open their eyes while the song is sung and the circles rotate. On the last word, the farmers race to be the first to the center to grab the chicken. They can only travel through gates, not under other arms!
5. Establish a rotation so that all can have a turn to play the game. Encourage the class to sing along as they play.
6. When all have had a turn, review singing the song without the game. Ask the class to clap the rhythm of the words. What words move slowly, and what words move quickly?
7. Beginning with the slowest sounds ("Brown"), break the text into groups based on rhythm. When you get to "Chicken on a fencepost," introduce or review the concept of sixteenth notes.
8. Echo-speak and clap mixed patterns using words from the song. Examples:
  - *Brown, Brown, Chicken on a Brown*
  - *Fencepost, Josie, Susan, Brown*
  - *Chicken on a Fencepost, Chicken on a Susan!*
  - *Can't dance, Josie, Can't dance Susan!*
9. Break the class into small groups of 3-4 students. Pass out rhythm cards with quarter notes, quarter rests, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes.
10. Have leaders in each group compose original patterns using four cards. Each group then performs the pattern with speech and body percussion as an ostinato, while the rest of the class sings the song. Identify complementary and parallel rhythms that occur between the ostinato and the song.
11. Switch leaders and give every student a chance to compose and share a rhythm. As a class, select a good complementary rhythm that is never parallel with the song for more than two beats (less is better). Notate and save for later.
12. Sight-read the melody of the song from staff notation, using solfège. Identify low *la* and low *so*.
13. Move to the barred percussion and set up in F-*do* Pentatonic. Warm-up and review where all the solfège pitches transfer to the bars, including low *la* and *so*.
14. Have the class play just the pattern "Chicken on a fencepost" on F, practicing alternating mallets. Play the rest of each phrase for the class ("can't dance, Josie"). Ask the class to discover and practice the last phrase, "Hello, Susan Brown!"
15. Go back to the first three phrases, and work together to identify, practice, and play "can't dance, Josie." Combine the entire melody, practice, and play as a class.
16. Introduce the level drone (BM and AM in the score) by dividing the class into two sections based on range, and giving cues, "low, high, high." Combine and perform as accompaniment to the melody.
17. Return to the class-generated rhythmic ostinato. Ask the class to play the ostinato on one bar, then explore playing it on a small group of bars. Have students demonstrate their choices, then select one that is melodically complementary to teach the entire class.
18. Create a final performance using drone, melodic ostinato, and melody.

**Assessment**

**Performance Assessment:** Play individual parts in ensemble with rhythmic and melodic accuracy.