



Guitar Virtual Learning

Phrasing

April 24, 2020



Guitar

Lesson: April 24, 2020

Objective/Learning Target:

What is phrasing in music, and how does it make a performance more musical?

Warm-Up Activity:

- Speak or clap one note for a count of ten.
- Then, do it again, but this time, get gradually louder as you count 1-5 then get gradually quieter as you count 6-10.
- Finally, do it a third time, and this time start loud but start getting quieter until you reach 5, then start getting louder from 6-10.

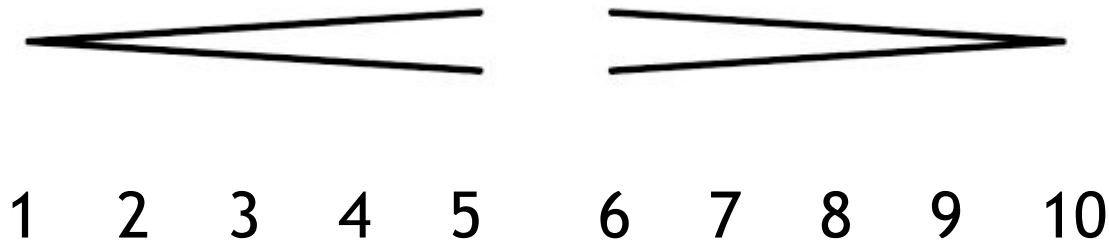


Alternative Warm-Up Activity:

- If you have a guitar, strum down 10 times evenly
- Then, do it again, but this time, get gradually louder as you strum 1-5 then get gradually quieter as you strum 6-10.
- Finally, do it a third time, and this time start loud but start getting quieter until you reach 5, then start getting louder from 6-10.

This is what that looks like in music:

Earlier this week we learned about dynamics. This is what your first example would have looked like using crescendo and decrescendo markings:





Now, let's talk about what this has to do with phrasing

Trying speaking the following sentence out loud:

“I think we should eat ice cream for dinner tonight.”

When you say that phrase out loud, do you say each word the same way? Does any particular word get more emphasis?



When we speak, we naturally emphasize important words in our sentences

When you said the sentence, you probably stressed the words “ice cream” the most. The natural inflection of your voice builds to the subject of the sentence (ice cream) and then backs away.

- To make our music more natural sounding, we want to do the same thing while we play the guitar.



Let's try it ourselves!

Sing the first phrase of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”. As you sing, crescendo to the word “star”, then start to decrescendo until the word “are.”

It should look something like this:

“Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are”



If you don't want to sing it, you can strum the beat on your guitar while you sing in your head. Try to have your strums match the volume of the crescendo and decrescendo.



Now, try it over the whole song

With each phrase, try getting louder for the first half, then softer for the second:

“Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are?
Up above the world so high, like a diamond in the sky;
Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are?”



Follow-up activity:

Now that you understand how performers use phrasing, lets see if you can hear it being done by some professional musicians.

Click on the link and listen to the musical duo Music Travel Love sing and play a cover of Ed Sheeran’s song “Perfect”. As you watch, listen to how both their vocals and their guitars make the performance more emotional and interesting by using phrasing.

[Perfect - Music Travel Love](#)



Guitar Playing Follow-up activity:

Let's see if you can create some phrasing yourself.

Remember our backing track you practiced strumming patterns to? This time, keep the strum pattern simple (even just steady quarter notes to the beat!) and focus instead on creating phrasing by strumming the first 4 beats steadily louder and the next four beats steadily quieter. Experiment on your own as you feel inspired by the music to make each phrase unique!

[Click here to get to the backing track](#)



Extension activity for added challenge!

Now, take a song you learned on guitar earlier in the school year. If you don't have the music anymore, see if you can find the words or chords online. Whether looking at sheet music or the lyrics, plan out and write down the phrasing you are going to execute as you play your guitar. Then, play through the whole piece with your phrasing choices, and hear how it sounds!