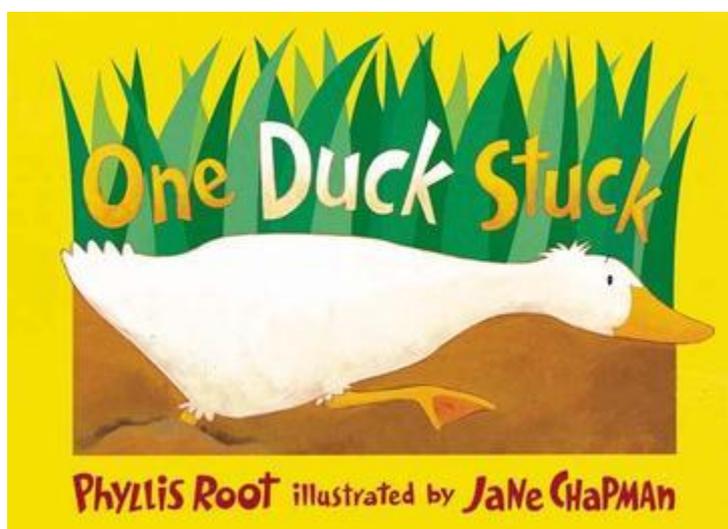


**One Duck Stuck** (by Phyllis Root, Walker Books, 0-7445-6344 5)

This book is a lovely way of framing musical compositions by children. The book is sadly currently out of print, but I think most schools have a copy and second hand copies are widely available online.

This project is suitable for EYFS and KS1 children. Y3s may also enjoy it and would be able to take a more independent role in devising and performing compositions.

Our recorded version of the book is essentially a suggested way of linking children's musical compositions together to form a performance – either in school, online or as a sharing event with other schools via Zoom.



[Here's a recording](#) of the framework you can use in performance (see notes below)

### How it works

The book is a musical rondo. There are two repeating sections for everyone to join in with:-

- **'Help! Help! Who can help?'** (repeated four times on the recording)
- **'No luck. The duck stays stuck deep in the muck down by the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ marsh'**  
(NB the two adjectives at the end of this section change each time)

The intervening sections of the book introduce the animals; these are the sections to be interpreted and performed by individual children / groups / schools.

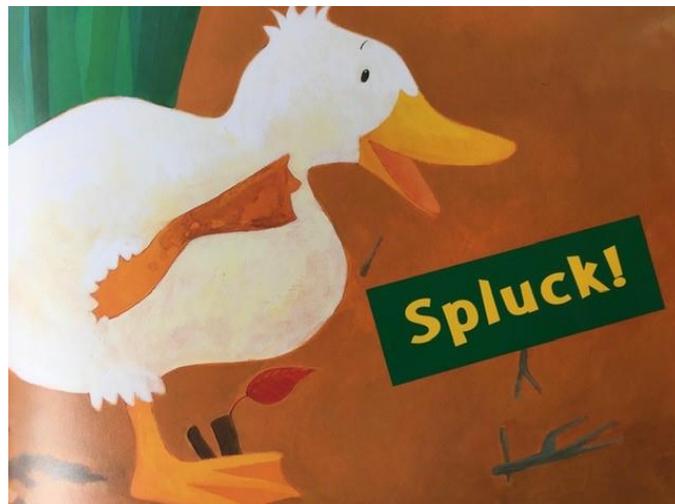
eg 'We can! We can! Two fish tails going swish swim to the duck. Splish, splish.'

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At the end there is a cumulative chanted section. The chant is based around a count of eight. Each animal has a word in the chant. Each group will come in in turn with their word/sound and continue until the final "SPLUCK!" (NB the section 'They all help the duck who got stuck in the muck' has been left out of the recording).

### Things to do with your children

- read the book and talk about the animals - some of them are possibly unfamiliar.
- learn the repeated sections and get the children to join in with them.
- listen to those repeated bits on the recording and learn how they go.
- choose an animal / animals to use as the basis of your composition / compositions.
- Prepare a short composition – vocal and/or instrumental, live or recorded – for a specific animal/ animals, incorporating the words of the section. See below for suggested ways into composing.
- Learn your animal's sound and how it fits into the cumulative chant at the end - you may want to incorporate movement into this.
- Rehearse a 'SPLUCK!' using voices / instruments / body percussion / movement. Everyone will perform a single "SPLUCK!" together at the end.



### Putting on an performance

This could be something you do across a number of classes / bubbles in school, sharing out the animal compositions. The performance could then either be recorded or could happen live in classrooms via Zoom.

We are keen to use this an inter-school project too. We aim to have sharing events in the spring term (or earlier if people would like).

Please email [sheena.masson@camden.gov.uk](mailto:sheena.masson@camden.gov.uk) if you would like to take part in an inter-school Zoom event with some of your children.

## Ways into creating the composition

*'The material of music is sound and silence. Integrating these is composing.'*  
(John Cage)

- Composition is to do with the organisation of sound. It takes place when children are able to make choices about the organisation and control of the sounds they make.
- It is to do with the creation of patterns of sound that can be repeated or recreated - we might say that composition has taken place when children are able to perform a sequence of musical events more than once.

The classroom is possibly the least useful environment for getting children to engage in creativity through composition – too much noise, too many people, not enough equipment, a time restriction. There are, however, some ways in.

- A composition does not need to be complicated.
- It does not need to be long – in fact if it is to be part of a whole book performance, each composition should be less than a minute.
- It may involve using instruments, but it does not have to.
- Remember there is no “right” or “wrong”.
- For young children, the process is probably best led by an adult.
- Older children will need the process to be modelled by you, but then will be able to compose more independently.

Start with the words in the text and the idea of the animal.

*eg Seven snails making slippery trails, slide to the duck – Sloosh Sloosh*

- explore different ways of saying them
- find ways of moving to them
- add body percussion if appropriate
- investigate instrument sounds to include
- investigate layering the sounds – vocal and instrumental
- make up patterns on instruments / voices / bodies – maybe using word rhythms as a starting point
- draw the sounds / create symbols that can be used in a graphic score to help the children remember their composition
- record children making the sounds so they can listen back to them
- make some decisions about how the piece should start and how sounds are to be incorporated (see Composition Checklist below for some questions to help here)
- create a drawing / graphic score of the piece – *think in terms of lists and layers ie sounds that come one after another and sounds that overlap or happen at the same time*
- rehearse the piece with the group – with you or one of the children leading / conducting

- record the performance and listen back. Does it need changing? How can you make it better?

For further information and to sign up for an inter-school sharing event, contact [sheena.masson@camden.gov.uk](mailto:sheena.masson@camden.gov.uk)

