

# NKOSI SIKELEL' IAFRIKA

Enoch Sontonga



## ABOUT THIS SONG

'Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika' has been part of the joint national anthem of South Africa since 1994. It was originally composed as a hymn in 1897.

## THEMES/SUBJECTS

Africa/anthem/religion

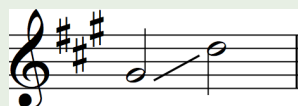
## CURRICULUM KEY LINKS

Languages, Literacy & Communication  
Humanities

## DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

### Vocal range

A 10th



### Vocal format

Unison/independent parts

### Musical elements

Texture and structure

### Musical characteristics

Unison and three-part harmony, simple  
AB (binary) structure

## Warm-up Exercises

- Ask learners to gradually raise both their arms above their head and at the same time breathe in, feeling the ribcage lifting. Hold this for four beats; then slowly lower both arms and blow out, keeping the chest lifted.
- Ask all to 'hum' as a siren, moving up and down in pitch, following your hand signal from high up in the air to very low by your knees.
- Then ask them to echo back the first phrase of the song sung by yourself on one note (G) using the same rhythm (see characteristic rhythm below). Gradually change to use a higher pitch and ensure that all learners give an accurate response.
- Demonstrate the characteristic rhythm of the song:



- Ask learners to clap or say this rhythm.

## Suggested key links with other Areas, cross-cutting themes &/or local, national and international contexts

- This is part of the joint National Anthem of South Africa. Can you locate South Africa using an atlas or using an online map?
- Look at the meaning of the words of this anthem. Compare these with the Welsh National Anthem and other National Anthems.
- Are there any common themes?
- Learn and perform a range of National Anthems in their original languages.

GRADING: INTERMEDIATE

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## Teaching and learning

- 1 Explain to learners that the words of this national anthem are in Xhosa, one of the official languages of South Africa. The lyrics sheet and interactive screen include the correct spelling of the lyrics and a simplified phonetic pronunciation of the words.
- 2 Listen to a recording of the anthem and ask learners to focus on the pronunciation of the words. Spend some time asking them to echo back some of the words that are difficult to pronounce.
- 3 When they are familiar with the words, start with the melody (Part 1) in unison and sing or play the first two bars a number of times, if possible unaccompanied.
- 4 Return to the beginning before adding the second phrase. This phrase begins two notes higher, A to C# (a 3rd), than the last note in phrase one.
- 5 Work through all four phrases of the first section, and remind learners that the first section is repeated. This provides an opportunity to discuss the structure of the song – a simple AAB (binary) structure.
- 6 Introduce Part 2 of the first section to everyone a phrase at a time; the rhythm is the same as Part 1 and the pitch range includes four notes – EF#G#A. The first phrase starts three notes lower than Part 1, A to E (a 4th).
- 7 When all learners are confident with this part, divide the group into two equal groups. Give one group the melody (Part 1) and the other group the harmony (Part 2); try it unaccompanied; encourage learners to sing whole phrases in one breath and to sustain the long notes at the end of every phrase.
- 8 Introduce Part 3 of the first section to everyone a phrase at a time; the rhythm is the same as Part 1 and the pitch the majority of the time is five notes lower (in 6ths). In bar 6 there is an example of a chromatic movement, moving up from E>F>F#.
- 9 When all learners are confident with this part, divide the group into three equal groups. Give one group the melody (Part 1), the middle harmony (Part 2), and the bottom harmony (Part 3). Try to perform with or without the recording. Change parts round so that everyone has an opportunity to sing all parts.

## Integral Skills

- Introduce the second section to everyone. Part 1 moves on different beats. Compare with Parts 2 and 3, which have exactly the same rhythm and pitch. It is important that those singing Part 1 listen very carefully to the first note in the second section (A) sung by Parts 2 and 3, as this is also their first note. When all learners are confident with this section, divide the group into three smaller groups and perform with the backing track.
- Ensure that long notes at the end of each phrase are held for their full value, and experiment by breathing after every other phrase.
- When the group is confident enough, perform without any accompaniment so that learners listen very carefully to the quality of the sound.

**GRADING: INTERMEDIATE**

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## Statements of what matters:

- *Exploring the expressive arts is essential to developing artistic skills and knowledge and it enables learners to become curious and creative individual*
- *Creating combines skills and knowledge, drawing on the senses, inspiration and imagination*

- Learners could perform the song with half playing their parts on instruments and the other half singing their vocal line. They could appraise each other's attempts before changing over to either sing or play.
- With a partner they should compose a two-bar rhythmic pattern, with four crotchet beats in each bar. When they have refined their rhythm, they should compose a melody to the rhythm in intervals of 6ths, with only step movements; that is, if one is playing middle C the other would play E below the C, and this interval should stay the same throughout. This could be performed on instruments to the rest of the group.

## Assessment for Learning:

- *Responding and reflecting, both as artist and audience, is a fundamental part of learning in the expressive arts*

### Questioning

#### Tool: Choice of answer

What is the structure of the song?

- I think the structure is **AAB** because the first two sections sound the same and the last section is different.
- The structure is as easy as **ABC**.
- The anthem probably has a beginning, a middle and an end, so I think the structure is **ABA**.

### Feedback

#### Tool: Instant feedback

Give learners instant feedback during the teaching and learning process; the feedback could be on their ability to maintain their part when singing in parts. Following the learning process, give feedback on their ability to respond to your hand directions when changing the dynamic levels.

### Self- and peer assessment

#### Tool: Peer assessment

Ask learners to give comments on each other's work. Here are some possible comments for you to suggest:

- You need to hold/sustain the long notes at the end of each phrase longer.
- Try to improve your tuning when singing a harmony part.
- Try to make the words clearer.