

## Firefly

*Firefly, firefly, in the night,  
With a yellow, with a yellow, with a yellow light.  
How I love to watch you shine tonight.*

A beautiful, flowing folk song from Japan, which highlights the use of the 6<sup>th</sup> note of the scale (La), and uneven phrase length.

### ♪ Starter Activity

#### Step Back Baby, Step Back

*Not last night, but the night before; Step back baby, step back  
Twenty-four robbers at my door; Step back baby, step back  
Opened up the door and let them in; Step back baby, step back  
Hit them on the head with a rolling pin; Step back baby, step back  
I picked up my frying pan; Step back baby, step back  
Should have seen the way those robbers ran; Step back baby, step back  
Some ran east and some ran west; Step back baby, step back  
Some ran over the cuckoo's nest; Step back baby, step back.*

- An energetic call and response song from America, using the La, So, Mi tone-set.
- This is a great piece for practising pulse, and story-telling with expression. Make the telling of the story as dramatic as you like.
- Add movement such as two steps back, two steps forward, as well as other actions to describe the story.
- After singing it with you being the leader, divide the group into two, and get the children to become the leader and response parts.
- Extend the story; write some more phrases about what happened next.

### 🔧 Useful Warmups

- Use the arms as wings to take full breaths, with a little pause before letting the breath out, keeping the rib cage high.
- Add sounds such as ss, zz, vv, whoosh, which emulate the sound of the Firefly flying, but also warms the voice up very well. Linking warm up exercises to the theme of the song gives the children more reason to do it, rather than simply needing to warming up the voice.
- Tongue Twister: 'Friendly Flying Fireflies' using the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> (Do, Mi, So, La) notes of the scale, reinforces the use of the 6<sup>th</sup> note of the scale (La), in preparation for the song. To add some variation, try this singing legato and staccato.

## 🎵 Teaching Tips

- The use of La in the final phrase, ‘How I love to...’ can feel a little unexpected. Spend a little time highlighting this, and getting everyone singing the note confidently.
- Characterise the piece by adding staccato and legato sections as if the Firefly were going from place to place.

## 👁️ Things To Look Out For

- Uneven phrase length – point out that the middle phrase is three bars, rather than two. Perhaps use arms as wings to demonstrate that this is longer than the first and third phrase.
- Rests – there is a crotchet rest at the end of each phrase. Can the group all finish at the same time, and take the next breath together?

## 👤 Extension Activities / Cross Curricular Links

- Sing the song as a round in two and then three parts, with a group coming in at the start of each phrase (Firefly, With a yellow, How I love).
- Think about how to end the song – I repeated the last line once, but this could be done quite a few times, getting quieter each time perhaps.
- Write more verses, or change the colour of the Firefly’s glow in further verses.
- Find out more about Fireflies/Glow worms, linking to geography, nature and the environment.

## 🎵 Glossary of Musical Terms

<b>Pulse</b>	The basic beat or ‘heartbeat’ of the music.
<b>Tone-set</b>	A song will use a series of notes, and when they are collated using sol-fa, they form a tone-set, eg. La, So, Mi.
<b>Do, Mi, So, La</b>	Pitches of the scale used – the 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Legato</b>	Singing in a smooth, linked up way.
<b>Staccato</b>	Singing in a short, detached way.
<b>Crotchet rest</b>	Silence for one beat.

