

La Mar Estaba Serena – Spain

La mar estaba serena, serena estaba la mar.

La mar estaba serena, serena estaba la mar.

The sea was calm, calm was the sea.

A lovely Spanish folk song, well known in all Spanish speaking countries, incorporating a beautiful lyrical melody, and also a fun tongue twister game.

🎵 Starter Activity

*A sailor went to sea, sea, sea,
To see what they could see, see, see.
But all that they could see, see, see,
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea.*

- Change 'sea/see' to 'chop' in verse 2, 'knee' in verse 3, and then try all three together for verse 4.
- Try putting the words, 'sea', 'chop' and 'knee' into your thinking voice, and sing the song through, still including the actions.
- Make up a hand-clapping game to do while singing the song. Perhaps try this with a partner.

🔊 Useful Warmups

- Incorporate sounds of the sea such as the waves (ss, sh, rr, whoosh, crash), a sea-gull (caw-caw), throwing a beach ball (woah) or a volleyball (pop). This will warm the voice up well, as it really gets the breath flowing; don't be afraid to use the highest and lowest parts of the voice when doing this.
- "Rolling Waves" singing notes 1, 3, 5, 4, 2, 1 of the scale. Any phrase related to the theme again helps to focus students, while also warming the voice up fully. Try adding some of your own, perhaps varying the tempo to make the phrase more of a tongue-twister.

🎵 Teaching Tips

- Both songs rely on good diction, especially when changing the vowels in 'La Mar..,' so encourage students to use their tongue, teeth, and lips to help with this.
- Even though lots of the sounds in the warm-up are ones you may have used before, by adding a narrative element, it becomes much more interesting, and really helps to fire imaginations.

👁️ Things To Look Out For

- 'La Mar..' is in the time signature of 6/8, in compound time (see glossary below), and adds a rocking feel to the song, as if on the sea.
- Changing the vowel to ay, ee, i, oh, oo in 'La Mar..' is lots of fun, but can get a little confusing, so be really clear about which vowel you're singing each time.

Extension Activities / Cross Curricular Links

- Try 'La Mar..' in a two part round, with group 2 starting as group 1 sings 'serena'.
- This song is also known as 'La mar estaba salada' (the sea was salty). How else might you be able to describe the sea? Perhaps find out the Spanish translation, and try singing the song using the new word/s.
- Build up a sea sound-scape using some of the sounds suggested above, and adding your own ideas. This could be used as an introduction or ending to 'La Mar..' when performing the piece.

Glossary of Musical Terms

6/8	Six quaver beats in each bar, which is more usually counted as two lots of three.
Compound Time	When the beat is broken down into three part rhythms, and the top number is divisible by three (6,9, 12).
Scale	A major/minor scale is an ordered sequence of 8 notes, starting on a certain note, and ending on the same note an octave above or below, eg. C-C.
Tempo	The speed at which a song or scale is sung.

