Composers use dynamic markings to communicate how loudly or quietly music is to be played or sung. When a heavy metal guitarist comes blaring into the shop, Quaver responds by adjusting his volume and calming a startled baby. The raucous display provokes Quaver and his dynamic volunteers to investigate how dynamics add feeling to music.

**Students will learn:**
- The word dynamics and what it means.
- The meaning and use of dynamic markings ff, f, mf, mp, p, and pp on a score.
- The words crescendo (gradually louder) and decrescendo (gradually quieter).
- The ways composers use dynamics in their music.
- The effect dynamics have on musical expression.

**Vocabulary**
- Piano
- Forte
- Pianissimo
- Fortissimo
- Sforzando
- Crescendo
- Decrescendo
- Mezzo
- Contrast
- Range*
- Technique*

* concepts included in the Teacher Guide, but not in the DVD
LESSON INTRO  Introducing the episode

Bring a lively volunteer to the front of the group and explain that you want him or her to react appropriately to the sentences you say.

**Teacher sentence 1:** You have just won a million dollars!

The volunteer’s reaction may be “yippee” or “I can’t believe it,” and will likely be loud. Now have the volunteer use the same words in response but delivered very quietly or whispered. It doesn’t seem to fit with the mood. In a discussion, see if students can identify the problem.

Then choose another volunteer to respond to this whispered sentence:

**Teacher sentence 2:** Guess what I found out that nobody else knows?

The volunteer may react by quietly saying, “What is it?” Now have the volunteer give the same reaction, but this time very loudly. Ask other students how they would have responded.

The volume used to speak is really important; it helps speech become more expressive. The same is true for music. Volume in music is called dynamics and it helps music be more expressive.
Dynamic Signs
Purpose: Listening to a piece of music critically
Cut out the flashcards of dynamic markings and distribute them to students. Talk about each and ask the students what they mean. Begin the game by listening to the short pieces of music provided: Beethoven’s 5th Symphony, 1st Movement (Track 1), Monster Attack (Track 2), and Dynamic Attack (Track 3). Ask students to place the dynamic markings in the order they occur in each piece. You may want to start them off with the correct dynamic. If incorrect answers are given, use it as an opportunity to review the piece as it plays.

Follow the Dynamic Leader
Purpose: How different dynamics can change the feel of a song
Choose a simple nursery rhyme or song for the class to sing, with one student serving as the leader. Using the dynamic signs from the previous game, ask the designated student to select a dynamic for the others to sing. The leader can change the dynamic mid-song, or crescendo and decrescendo. During the exercise, keep their volume in check, so forte is not shouted and their piano is more than a whisper.

Dynamics Hide and Seek
Purpose: The application of dynamics to a song
Hide a small object while one student is out of the room. When the student returns, challenge the others to help him/her find it by singing any well-known song such as Row, Row, Row Your Boat or You Are My Sunshine. They should sing louder when the seeker is close to the object and quieter when the seeker is further away. Try this with an instrument, playing louder or quieter depending upon the seeker’s proximity to the hidden object. For a variation, switch around the dynamics.

Discussion Points
- What word means loud in music? **forte**
- What word means soft? **piano**
- What is added to communicate extra loud or extra soft? **-issimo**
- What does crescendo mean? **get louder**
Dynamic Conductors
Purpose: Controlling dynamics with the hand
Ask students to describe the conductor’s role in an orchestra. Answer: to keep everyone in time and to control the dynamics. Demonstrate some typical conducting signals: hand held higher with palm up (to mean louder), hand held lower with palm held down (to mean quieter), hand moving up or down (to mean gradually louder or quieter). Choose a student conductor and have the class sing a selection of songs during which your maestro controls the dynamics with hand signals but does not have to keep the beat.

VIDEO REPLAY
Use Dynamics
Purpose: Listening to a song about dynamics
Revisit the song Use Dynamics (Track 4) from the episode. Invite your students to sing along using the backing track provided. To make it more fun, try working out a hand motion or action to accompany each dynamic marking.

QSoundFX
Have students choose and place different sound effects, music, and live recording on time lines to go alongside video. Have them mix the dynamics of their sound effects so they balance and enhance the video they are watching.

QGrooves
Students can create music using loops (small one-measure packets of sound) in QLoops. Dynamics come into play as they mix their tracks. Each track has a volume slider, which will help them set the dynamics for the piece they have composed.
Speak the Lingo
Purpose: Becoming conversant with the vocabulary of dynamics
Encourage your students to use dynamics words in everyday conversation. Ask them to come back to class with at least one story of how they used a dynamics word. Remind them that they may have to explain what a particular word means. For example: “My little sister was shouting in the house. I asked her to decrescendo (get quieter) and she did,” or “Forte, mum! I can’t hear you.”

My Dynamics Story
Purpose: Remembering and using dynamics words
Ask students to read the paragraphs on the worksheet, and have them add in the appropriate dynamic marking to make the story as interesting to listen to as possible. Ask students to read their dynamic story aloud.

Note: Dynamics are used in reading as well as music to express feelings and create atmosphere.

My Dynamics Diary
Purpose: Assessing understanding of dynamics
Give students the Dynamics Diary worksheet at the close of the lesson. Ask them to keep a diary of sounds they hear throughout one day. What was the loudest (fortissimo) sound they heard? What was the quietest (pianissimo) sound? Use the worksheet to place sounds in order from the quietest to the loudest.
Language Arts  
IWB 2

Write a poem that can be read with increasing or decreasing volume. Below is one you can perform as a group. Experiment with the extremes of quiet and loud. This is called the range.

A little mouse lives in a little hole,  
Lives softly in a little hole  
When all was quiet as quiet could be... (big pause)  
OUT SHE POPPED!

You can also assign students the task of showing dynamics in the way they write their words:  
Caterpillar, caterpillar, wriggle about  
Caterpillar, caterpillar, growing stout  
Caterpillar, caterpillar, spin your cocoon  
Caterpillar, caterpillar, butterfly soon!

*Note: Experiment with rearranging the lines of this poem using the IWB.*

Art  
Tracks 5 & 6

Ask students to draw a line that communicates the idea of quietness, followed by a line that depicts what a really loud line would look like. Next, have them create a line that moves progressively from quiet to loud and vice versa. Supply pastel-colored chalk and dark-colored paper, and ask students to draw what they hear in the music. Allow them free interpretation. It need not to be a recognizable picture, but a series of marks and lines varying in thickness and intensity. Encourage them to fill the page; play the track as many times as needed. There are two tracks included that have varied dynamics: *Wagner’s Ride of the Valkyries (Track 5)*, and *Gentleness (Track 6)*.

Materials Needed  
- Pastel-colored chalk  
- Dark-colored paper
Dynamic Percussion

Purpose: Controlling the body is the way we create dynamics

Give each student a spoon and cup or any kind of beater and drum. Look at the 8 measures of quarter notes on the IWB. Play the piece together to a steady beat, making sure everyone is in time. Then start adding dynamics, making it as complicated as possible. Discuss which dynamics the class likes best. Increase the tempo of the piece and discuss how much more difficult it becomes to play.

Dynamic Instruments

Purpose: Instrument dynamics are created with special techniques

All instruments require a unique technique to play them. Discuss with students what they think the word technique means.

Listen to the tracks that feature performances by a tuba, piano, violin, guitar, and voice. Discuss how each musician produces quieter and louder sounds. If you have a student who plays an instrument, encourage him or her to bring it in so everyone can observe that particular technique. Invite students to mime the various techniques for fun.

Track 7 Tuba Pianoforte – Tuba: Soft and loud sounds are produced by breath control with less forceful blowing resulting in a quieter sound. Woodwind instruments employ a similar technique.

Track 8 Chopin’s Nocturne Op.9 No.1 – Piano: Quieter sounds are produced by a less forceful press of the key.

Track 9 Fiddle Forte – Violin: A louder violin sound is produced by pressing the bow more forcefully on the string.

Track 10 Guitar Gusto – Guitar: A louder guitar sound is produced by strumming the strings more forcefully with the pick or fingers.

Track 11 Carl Maria von Weber’s Der Freischutz, Huntsmen’s Chorus – Voice: A louder vocal sound is produced by using the diaphragm to push air more forcefully over the vocal chords. Listen up to 1 min. 40 sec. to hear a great crescendo.

Materials Needed

- Plastic cups
- Beater

Emphasize that music is not just about playing or singing notes correctly. The way notes are played or sung musically is important as well. This is what brings music alive.
TEACHER NOTES

Featured Instruments

Electric Guitar

Piano

Drum Kit

Triangle

Voice