

# A Dicey Little Lesson

By

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Last November at the wonderful American Orff-Schulwerk Association Conference the Boutique had wonderful handmade items for sale. Each year people flock to the Boutique for the latest and greatest! I'm no different!! I usually get over during a break from the booth set-up just to see what the goodies are for that particular year.

I just had to buy! I know, I'm retired, but I still give workshops and even though the direction ideas were sold out, I could not resist the lovely large dice they were selling. So, what to do with them! One night it just came to me and I think you might like a creative writing lesson using dice, that is, unless you teach in an area where you will be chastised for using dice in a lesson!

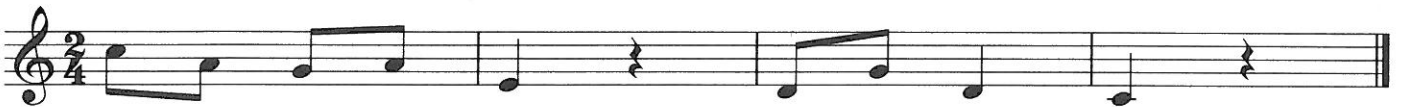
1. Choose the key for the composition. I'm keeping my examples in C Major.
2. Create a pentatonic scale by removing the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> tones. In C Major these would be "F" and "B".
3. Review how many beats each note receives in 4/4 time: whole note-4 beats, half note-2 beats, quarter note-1 beat, and 2 eighth notes to make 1 beat as they receive ½ beat each. If you wish to include dotted half notes and 16<sup>th</sup> notes you may review them as well.
4. Explain that for our purposes, the last pitch must be "C".
5. Demonstrate an example. There are 3 examples given.
  - a. Example 1 is in 4/4 time. In my example the first roll of the dice was a 5. There must be 5 tones heard in measure 1. The next roll of the dice was a 1. Only 1 tone may be heard for 1 beat in measure 2. The third roll was a 3. Only 3 tones may be heard. The next roll of the dice was a 7. There must be 7 tones in the last measure and the last tone must be a "C".



- b. Example 2 is in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time. I would also process this with the same procedure. In my example, the first roll was a 1, the second roll was a 3, the third roll was a 6 and the last roll was a 1 again.



- c. Example 3 is in  $\frac{2}{4}$  time. This will probably be the most difficult for the students. I rolled a 5 in the first measure, a 1 in measure 2, a 3 in measure 3, and a 7 in measure 4.



As you might imagine, this lesson is for upper elementary students. And, again, I cannot stress enough that you **MUST** know your population. If classroom teachers can use dice in board games you should be able to use this lesson.

I just went to Oriental Trading Company and found these:

**Plush Hanging Dice**  
**IN-6/38 \$15.99 Per Dozen**

Enjoy!