

The Twinkle Challenge

Many of our students can happily play 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' on their string instruments. Maybe they can play it different pairs of strings and maybe they even know all of the Suzuki Variations too!

A fun activity for students of any level is to take this well-known piece and learn to play it starting on each of the different fingers; an open string version, a first finger version, a second finger version, a 4th finger version, even different positions - you choose!

Ideas for Teaching the Twinkle Challenge

- * Students do this activity aurally - relying only on their ears and not reading any notes or finger charts.
- * Transposition activities can be applied to all of the Suzuki Variations!
- * Consider using 'high' and 'low' finger options too; for example start in Bb major then do the next transposition in B major being sure to use the same starting finger.
- * Many students will be capable of working this activity out for themselves at home. They can present their transposed versions to you in their next lesson (online or otherwise!).
- * This activity works well for online teaching too! Set a single challenge, for example "*Twinkle starting on a 3rd finger, you choose the starting string*". Set a short time limit — whatever might be appropriate for that student. The student then goes 'on mute' for that amount of time while they practice the transposed version and then they unmute themselves and perform their work to the teacher. This can also be done in small groups. Send the students into breakout rooms and then they can perform to each other once the time limit is up.

Ask the students if they found the activity valuable. Find out why or why not! It is important to engage students in thinking about and reflecting on their own learning. Having students talk 'about' music helps to develop their vocabulary and understanding of what they are doing. If they are doing this activity in peer groups, give students the opportunity to provide feedback to each other too!