

Ní mar a shíltear a bhítear

*Things are not always
what they seem*

by Dr Róisín Blunnie & Dr Seán Doherty

Teacher's Notes



in partnership with

Ní mar a shíltear a bhítear

‘Ní mar a shíltear a bhítear’ is a seanfhocal. It means ‘things are not always what they seem’. For example, sometimes we hear a sound, and we think we know what it is, but it turns out to be something else!

In verse 1, verse 2, and verse 3 of the song, we hear different sounds:

Verse 1: Is it a ghost?

Verse 2: Is it a monster?

Verse 3: Is it a wolf?



No, it's only a cow mooing!

No, it's only a sheep baaing!

No, it's only a puppy barking!



Sing the song with the song video. Join in with the spooky sounds and the animal sounds too!

Learning activities

1. Complete the following sentences in as many different ways as you can:

I thought I saw _____ but it was actually _____.

I thought I heard _____ but it was actually _____.

2. Complete a comic strip story inspired by this seanfhocal.

3. Colour in the colouring page for this song.

4. Complete the activity pages for this song to explore the themes ‘spooky’ and ‘bright’.



About the music

In this song, when the music is dark and spooky, we sing a phrase upwards and downwards in a minor key. This expresses our sense of fear and uncertainty.

When the music is bright and joyful, we sing a phrase upwards and downwards in a major key. This expresses our sense of relief and happiness.

The dark and spooky melody is in the key of **C minor**:

ascending



Ní mar a shíl-tear a bhí-tear.

descending



Ní mar a shíl-tear a bhí-tear.

The bright and joyful melody is in the key of **C major**:

ascending



Ní mar a shíl-tear a bhí-tear.

descending



Ní mar a shíl-tear a bhí-tear.

After learning the song and singing along with the song video, compare the minor melody and the major melody in the song, using words like 'dark' or 'bright', 'spooky' or 'joyful'.

Further activities

Practise singing the melody in the minor key and the melody in the major key.

Use an instrument to help.

Sing the melodies with tonic solfa instead of the words.

The minor-key melody begins on lah; the major-key melody begins on doh.

Melody in **C minor, with solfa:**

ascending

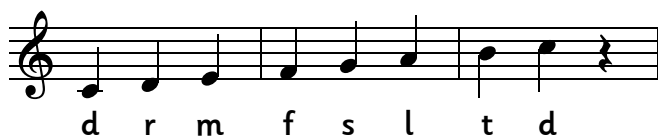


descending



Melody in **C major, with solfa:**

ascending



descending



Ní mór
a shíltear
a bhítear

