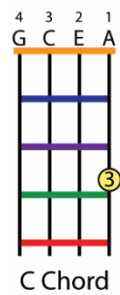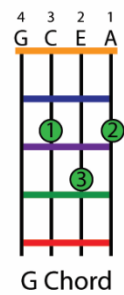# An Intro to Ukulele: AKA How do you Play this Thing?

Lorelei Batislaong
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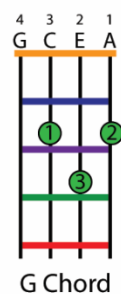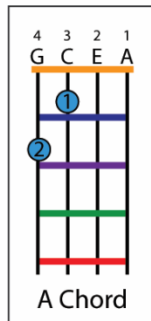lorelei.batislaong@utexas.edu

I chord   V chord   IV chord

C Chord   G Chord   F Chord

G Chord   D Chord   C Chord

F Chord   C Chord   B♭ Chord

D Chord   A Chord   G Chord

Tuning Knobs — Head

Fret

Fretboard — Fret Wire

Upper Bout

Sound Hole

Saddle

Bridge — Body

Lower Bout

G 4   C 3   E 2   A 1

OUT   IN   OUT

Thumb
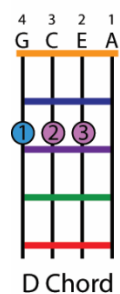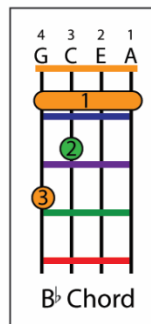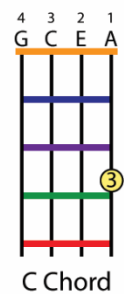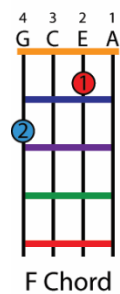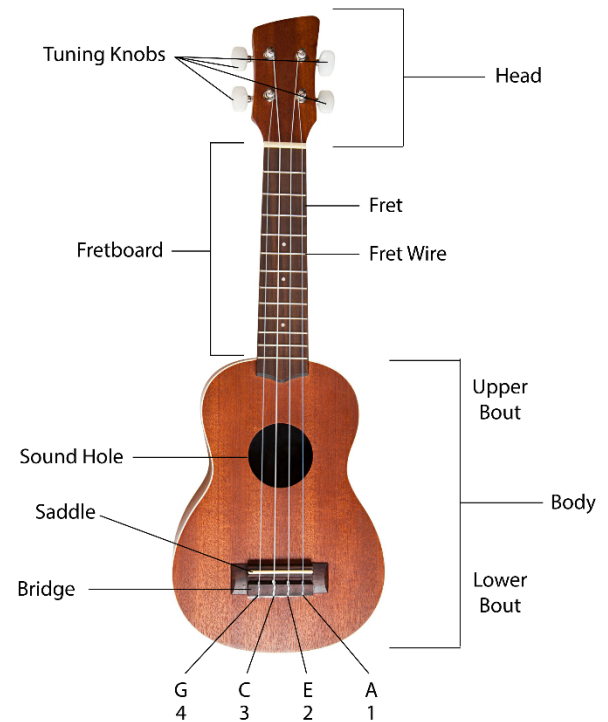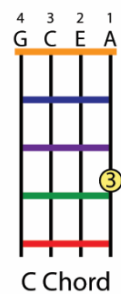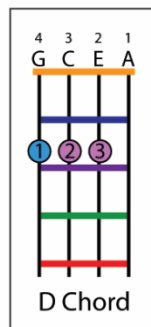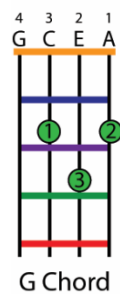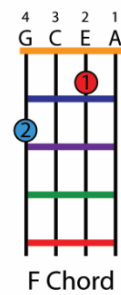
Finger Warm-ups

Work This Body recorded by Walk the Moon

Maiman, E., et al. (2014). Work This Body [Recorded by Walk the Moon]. On Talking is Hard [mp3 file]. Hollywood, CA: RCA.

White Sky by Vampire Weekend

Vampire Weekend. (2009). White Sky [Recorded by Vampire Weekend]. On Contra [mp3 file]. Brooklyn, NY; Mexico City, Mexico; New York City, NY: XL Recordings.

Pre-playing Considerations:

Classroom Management

Strings and Tuning
Consider:
Aquila Nylgut – commonly used, brighter sound can compensate for a cheaper ukulele
Martin Fluorocarbon– holds tuning, darker sound than Nylgut but not as quiet as nylon

Distribution

Ukulele to player ratio

Procedures

Horn carriage

Open tuning

4 3 2 1
G C E A

③

C Chord

Apple Tree

Ap - ple tree, Ap - ple tree. All the ap - ples fell on me.

I won't cry, I won't shout. If the ap - ples knock me out.
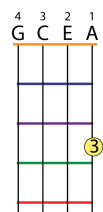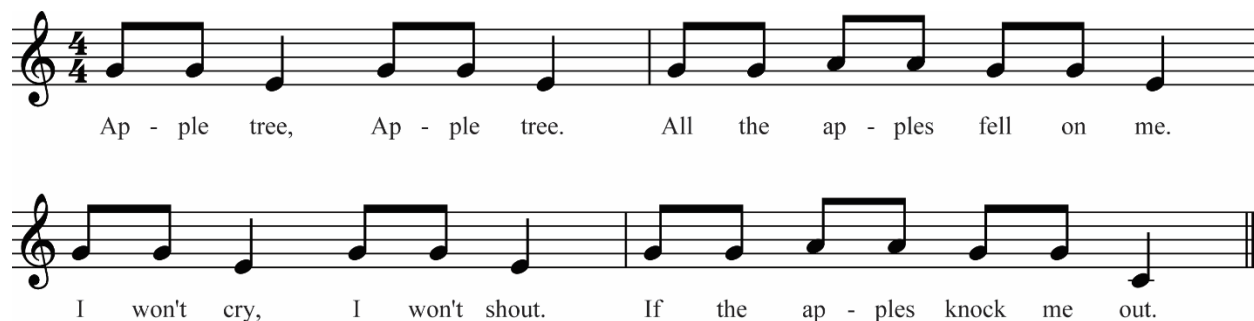
Objective: Create a strum pattern to accompany Apple Tree
- Students experience each strum pattern ostinato
- Teacher models the first apple pattern and combines it with a student selected apple pattern
- Students create own 4 beat strum pattern

Brae- burn

Crab Ap-ple

Jazz

Red de- li-cious

Gran-ny Smith
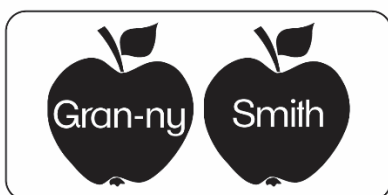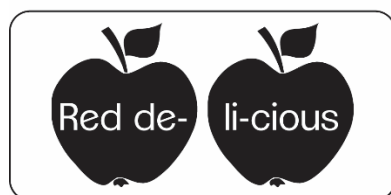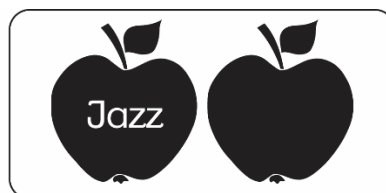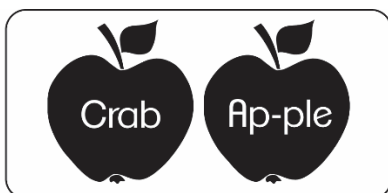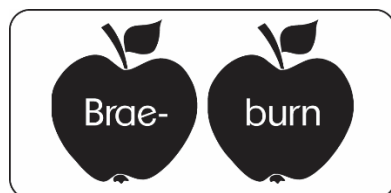
Strumming Pattern
Rhythmic Building Blocks

Teacher Talk

Introduce a few concepts at a time

Re-visit known song repertoire

Modes of repetition and differentiation:
Teacher plays - Students sing | Students plays - Teacher sings | Half Class | Full Class

4 3 2 1
G C E A

G Chord

Chase the Squirrel

Let us chase the squir - rel   up the hick - 'ry   down the hick - 'ry.

Let us chase the squir - rel   up the hick - 'ry   tree.
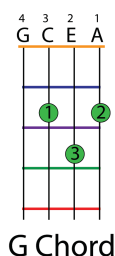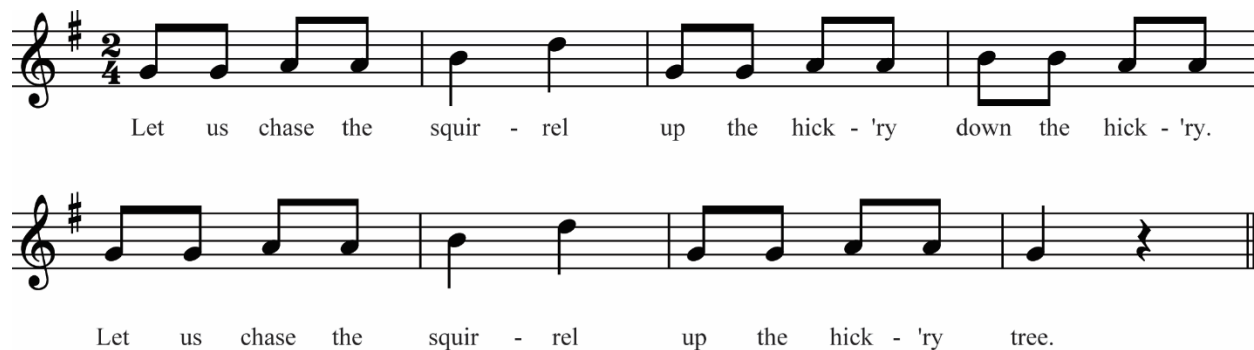
Objective: Play a game incorporating ukulele skills including the G chord

<u>Preparatory Activity – Ukulele Players</u>
- Teacher plays a four-beat rhythmic pattern using the G chord as students echo rhythmic pattern in feet (non-locomotor and locomotor)
- Students take turn leading the pattern

<u>Preparatory Activity – Game Participants</u>
- Introduce the following body movement:
    - Two steps on "hick-'ry"
    - Clap on "tree"

<u>Game</u>
Formation: Long ways set, spaced far apart (Squirrel group); Scattered formation between sets (tree group)
- Student establishes the strum pattern for the song
- Squirrels only move across the floor on "hick'ry"
- Trees attempt to catch a squirrel on "tree"
- In subsequent rounds, allow the trees to also move on "hick'ry"

Teacher Talk

Combine C chord and G chord for I - V songs in the key of C

F Chord

Are You Sleeping?

Are you sleep-ing? Are you sleep-ing? Bro-ther John, Bro-ther John.

Morn-ing bells are ring-ing. Morn-ing bells are ring-ing. Ding, dang, dong. Ding, dang, dong.
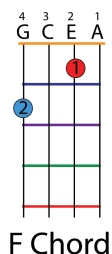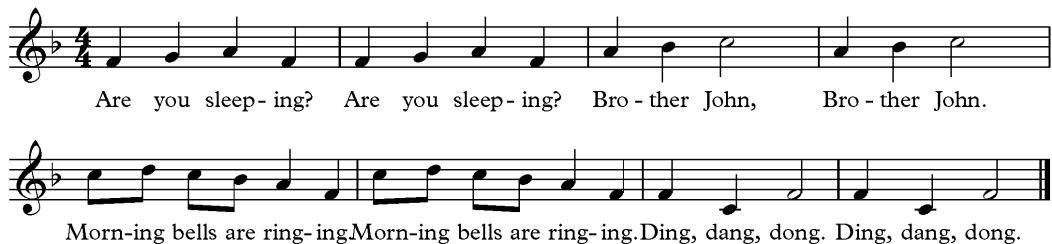
Objective: Introduce standard strumming pattern with syncopation.

Strum Pattern 1:
- Prepare strum pattern on the body.
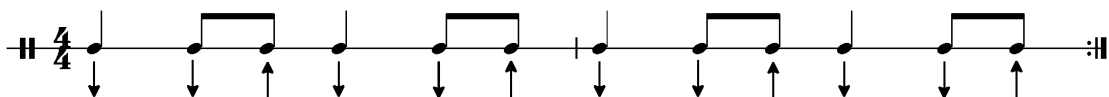
- Transfer to ukulele.
- Play and sing in various configurations.

Strum Pattern 2:
- Prepare strum pattern on the body. Although there is a rest on beat 3, encourage the students to show the down strum with movement without engaging the strings. This is indicated in the visuals with an empty arrow.
  - Use speech to support the learning process.
  - Internalize speech.

Bells ring - ing. Morn - ing bells ring - ing. Morn - ing
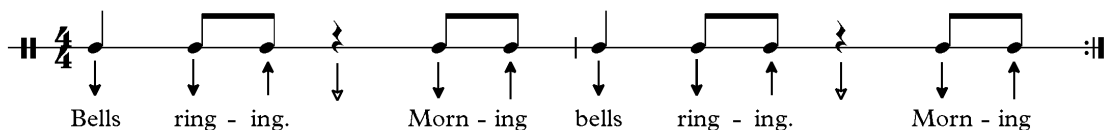
- Transfer to ukulele.
  - Use speech.
  - Internalize speech.

Strum Pattern 3:
- Prepare strum pattern on the body.

o   Use speech.
o   Internalize speech.

Bells   ring - ing.   The morn - ing   bells   ring - ing.   The morn - ing

- Transfer to ukulele.
    o   Use speech.
    o   Internalize speech

- Beat 3:
    o   Show the eighth rest on beat 3 with a silent down strum (don't engage strings).
    o   Play the eighth note on upbeat of 3 by engaging the strings during the up strum.
- Strum Pattern 3 is a standard strum pattern which accompanies many folk and pop songs.

Teacher Talk

With the addition of the F chord in our chord vocabulary,
what chord progressions are available now?

Try Everything

Objective: Perform a four chord song on the ukulele

Verse/Pre-chorus/Chorus/Hook								
C	F	C	G	C	F	C	G	C

C				F			

C	C			F	F		

C		C		F		F	

C	C	C		F	F	F	

Teacher Talk

Don't underestimate the power of recognition and repetitive progressions

Allowing a place for popular music isn't a sum-zero game in competition
with the folk song tradition. But it requires us to be responsible curators of music.
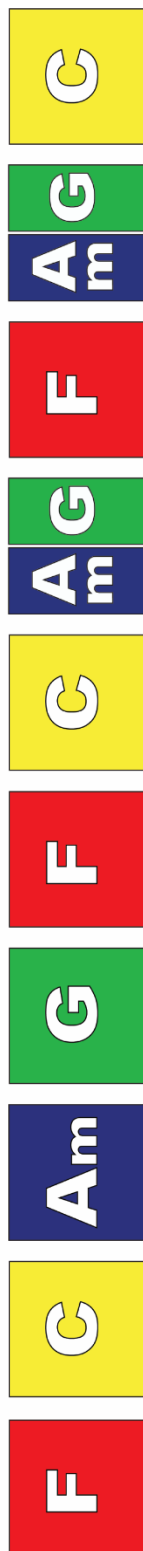
What are those responsiblitites?

Try Everything

Verse/Pre-chorus/Chorus/Hook

C F C G C F C G C

Bridge:

F C Am G F C Am G Am G C

Verse 1:
I messed up tonight,
I lost another fight
I still mess up but I'll just start again
I keep falling down, I keep on hitting the ground
I always get up now to see what's next

Pre-chorus:
Birds don't just fly, they fall down and get up
Nobody learns without getting it wrong.

Chorus:
I won't give up, no I won't give in
Till I reach the end and then I'll start again
No I won't leave, I wanna try everything
I wanna try even though I could fail
I won't give up, no I won't give in
Til I reach the end and then I'll start again
No I won't leave, I wanna try everything
I wanna try even though I could fail

Hook:
Oh, oh, oh, oh, ohh
Try everything (repeat 3.5X)

Verse 2:
Look at how far you've come,
you filled your heart with love
Baby you've done enough, take a deep breath
Don't beat yourself up, don't need to run so fast
Sometimes we come last, but we did our best

- Chorus -

Bridge:
I'll keep on making those new mistakes
I'll keep on making them every day
Those new mistakes

- Hook -

Try everything

Try Everything by Shakira

Furler, Sia, et al. (2015). Try Everything [Recorded by Shakira]. On Zootopia [mp3 file]. Los Angeles, CA & London, England: Walt Disney.

Apps

       Amazing Slow Downer
       Any Tune Pro
       Power Tuner
       Infinaut Ukulele Companion – Chord Chart
       Tuner - SNARK