
Plain Bob Minor –Teacher’s Notes

This toolbox contains resources and ideas for teachers who would wish to run a Plain Bob Minor workshop. The amount that can be covered will depend on the time available – whether it runs for half a day, or a whole weekend, or over a series of workshops. The second half of this workshop concentrates on ringing and calling touches, if there are time constraints, this may need to be arranged on a second day.

Target students

Ringers who have completed Learning the Ropes Level 4 – who have rung a quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles inside, can ring Plain Hunt Minor confidently starting on any bell and who are now ready to move on to ringing Plain Bob Minor.

Helpers

- A minimum of six helpers are required. The more competent the helpers the better the ringing will be.
- Helpers should be able to ring touches of Plain Bob Minor without hesitation and with good striking.
- For the second part of the workshop (calling touches), you will need at least one helper who can call various touches of Plain Bob Minor, including calling another bell unaffected.

Part 1 – Ringing a plain course

Practical targets

- To ring a plain course of Plain Bob Minor from at least two different inside bells.

Theory targets

- To understand the concept of a 5-6 dodge.
- To understand how Plain Bob Minor works.
- To understand the concept of the circle of work.
- To learn the circle of work.
- To understand the meaning of a place bell and the concept of different starts.
- To be aware of where the treble is passed.

Teaching Resources

- White board or equivalent
- Marker pens
- PowerPoint –Workshop Presentation (*Plain Bob Minor Toolbox*)
- Notes for theory sessions (*Plain Bob Minor Toolbox*)
- Laptop and projector

Learning Resources

- Crib Sheet - [Plain Bob Minor](#)

Circulate the crib sheet to the students beforehand. Reassure students that they do not need to memorise all or any of these before the workshop, it's just for information.

Introduction

Each course should start with a short introductory session of 10 minutes or so when the teacher introduces themselves, explains the outline of the course and the course objectives. During this session the teacher should allow time for the students to introduce themselves and state what they hope to get out of the course.

Practical sessions

Placing the band

Place your band to give the student the best learning experience. If possible, assign someone to stand behind the student, who will also debrief them after the touch.

- Students should be put into touches individually.
- They should be the only ringer who is not proficient at the method.
- If there is more than one ringer not striking correctly or not ringing the method correctly the student will not be able to hear where he or she is accurate or inaccurate and will not be able to learn from the practice session.
- Another student may be able to ring the treble.

Where to start

If you are running the session(s) for your own tower, you'll have a fairly good idea of the level of skill of each of the students. However, if this event is being run as part of a branch or district training programme, you may need to start the workshop by checking each student's level of skill – they might already be fairly competent at ringing Plain Bob Minor and need a bit of fine-tuning or they might need to consolidate basic knowledge of the method. The workshop is designed to accommodate students of different abilities.

Plain Hunt Minor

To warm up, ensure that all ringers are confident with striking plain hunt nicely on six bells. The rhythm of minor ringing without a tenor covering can be quite different if ringers are far more accustomed to ringing doubles.

Dodgy call changes in 5-6

One new skill for ringers who are progressing to minor will be striking dodges accurately in 5-6, so a few minutes work on this can really help later on.

- **Activity.** Call ringers into a change and ask the ringers in 5-6 to dodge. Call another change, ask the ringers in 5-6 to dodge. Repeat this several times so that ringers can get the feel and develop awareness of dodging in 5-6.
- **Theory.** Show students a diagram of Plain Bob Minor, point out that the dodges in 5-6 are either up or down. Explain the terms *dodge and lie* and *lie and dodge* and explain any other related jargon that is sometimes used such as *wrong* and *home* which some conductors might say when trying to help a ringer after a trip. Using the diagram of Plain Bob Minor, show the treble passing clues as bells are approaching the back and how they help a ringer to know whether they should be dodging 5-6 up or 5-6 down.

Ringling a plain course

- **Theory.** Using the Plain Bob Minor diagram, start by explaining how Plain Bob Minor is an extension of Plain Bob Doubles, with the addition of the work involving the 5-6 dodges at the back. Show how passing the treble for the other, familiar pieces of work, remains the same (except for the 3-4 down dodge, where you pass the treble in 5-6, not 3-4)..
- **Activity.** Ring plain courses of Plain Bob Minor with one student at a time on an inside bell with a helper standing beside them if available. As students are each going to have more than one go at this, encourage them to start on a different bell each time and not become too attached to a particular bell.
- **Theory.** Spend some time explaining the concept of place bells as they become increasingly important in ringing minor. Show the blue line and point to each place bell, how it starts and what its first piece of work is.

Part 2 – Ringing and calling touches of Plain Bob Minor

Practical targets

- To ring touches of Plain Bob Minor, starting from at least two different inside bells.
- To call a touch of Plain Bob Minor (usually with a student's own bell unaffected).

Theory targets

- To understand how the calls (bob and single) affect the method.
- To know what to do at a call and what the next piece of work is.
- To understand where the calls are made.
- To be familiar with the terms wrong, home, in, out and make the bob.
- To understand what a course and after bell are.

Getting started

If this is the beginning of the workshop, warm up by asking students to ring a plain course of Plain Bob Minor together, so that you're able to identify anyone who might be struggling with a particular aspect.

- **Theory.** If ringers are already familiar with ringing touches of Plain Bob Doubles, learning how to ring the bobs in Plain Bob Minor should be a straightforward progression. Explain that just as with doubles, bells will either run in, run out or make the bob. Using the crib sheet, show how the bell making the bob will still become fourth place bell, but instead of making long fifths next as in Plain Bob Doubles, they will need to ring the 5-6 down and 5-6 up work. Confirm that just as with long fifths in Plain Bob Doubles, the bells doing the 5-6 down or up dodges are unaffected by the calls.
- **Activity.** Ringing simple touches (just bobs).

Because touches of plain minor can be lengthy, it may be helpful to call shorter touches with more calls so that anyone who isn't ringing isn't sitting out for too long.

The following touches may be useful:

- BBB (36 changes) – three consecutive bobs means that the 2 and 3 run in or out at every call.
- PPBPPB (72 changes) – the 4 makes the bob twice.
- BBP BBP BBP (108 changes) – the 2, 3 and 4 each run in and out twice.

Singles

If ringers have already rung singles in [Plain Bob Doubles](#) (sometimes known as Old Bob) as a preparatory exercise, they may already be familiar with how to make singles. If not, here are some practice touches which might be useful:

- SBS (36 changes)
- SBBSBB (72 changes)
- BSBBSB (72 changes)
- BBSBBS (72 changes)
- BSPSPB (72 changes)
- PBSPBS (72 changes)
- SBPSBP (72 changes)
- BPSPPPSP (96 changes)
- SPSPSPSP (96 changes)
- BBPSSPBBP (108 changes)
- PPBPSSSS (108 changes)
- SPSBPSSSS (108 changes)
- SPSBPSSSPBPSBPP (180 changes)

Calling touches

Once you feel a ringer can confidently and competently ring touches and respond to calls, you might like to invite them to start putting in some simple calls. As many standard touches of plain minor methods are called with the conductor's bell unaffected, this is a good place to start and ringers who aspire to develop their conducting skills more widely can move onto more ambitious compositions at a later time.

Introducing calling

- **Activity.** Ask the student to stand behind any ringer and call a bob as their bell is about to dodge either 5-6 down (home) or 5-6 up (wrong), the call is made as the treble is about to lead. In this standard touch of 120, there will be four bobs (each made either wrong or home).
- **Activity.** Call the same touch whilst ringing (call themselves unaffected), not forgetting to call 'that's all' as the bells come back into rounds.

Common mistakes are putting the call in slightly too early or late, or missing a call and needing to wait another course to put the call in the right place. Positive and constructive feedback from the rest of the band if a call is a little too early or late can be really helpful.

Although a 120 with calls at wrong and home can be called from any working bell, by convention it is called from the tenor. Calling from other bells can cause the touch to include '6-5s at back' which some ringers object to as it is thought of as unmusical. For a practice touch among friends, as a new conductor is learning to put calls in, there is no technical reason why the standard wrong and home touch should not be called from a lighter bell if a ringer finds it easier to manage. It's worth discussing the issues around 6-5s though, as calling them *in public* might cause a few frowns from anyone who really dislikes hearing them.

After the session

- The student will benefit from keeping ringing (and calling) touches of Plain Bob Minor to maintain and develop their skills, so the group may wish to schedule further practices together to ring some extended touches.
- If the student is sufficiently advanced a goal of ringing a quarter peal can be set.
- If the student has not yet completed their Learning the Ropes Level 5, this course can be used as an aid to progression of the student towards the completion of this level.
- Explore related methods such as Little Bob Minor or Plain Bob Major.