COMPOSITION

COMPOSITION

Composing music is something that can be done by children or adults who have just started playing an instrument. In fact, playing an instrument and reading and writing music aren't prerequisites for composing music. Consider this passage from A.A. Milne's classic children's book, "Winnie The Pooh,":

"Pooh ... had made up a little hum that very morning, as he was doing his Stoutness Exercises in front of the glass: Tra- la-la, tra-la-la, as he stretched up as high as he could go, and then Tra-la-la, tra-la--oh, help!--la, as he tried to reach his toes. After breakfast he had said it over and over to himself until he had learnt it off by heart, and now he was humming it right through, properly. It went like this:

"Tra-la-la, tra-la-la, Tra-la-la, tra-la-la, Rum-tum-tiddle-um-tum. Tiddle-iddle, tiddle-iddle, Tiddle-iddle, tiddle-iddle Rum-tum-tum-tiddle-um."

This example comes from the world of make believe. Truth, however, can be stranger than fiction. Let's take a look at two very real and very well known composers: Paul McCartney and John Lennon. During a TV show, an interviewer asked Paul how it was possible that an enormously successful songwriter such as he couldn't even read or write music. Sir Paul's response was interesting:

"No, and as long as the two of us [John and I] know what we're doing, you know, what chords we're playing, and we remember the melody, we don't actually ever have the need to write it down or to read it."



In both the Pooh and Paul examples, the composers don't actually "write" their music down. They simply make it up. It's fairly safe to assume that Pooh couldn't read or write music given that his head was full of fluff and from the rest of the story we learn that he couldn't even read or write English. But what about the Beatles? Surely their approach to songwriting had to be more sophisticated than a stuffed bear, right?

Not really.

For the uninitiated, those who have never written a song before, or for those who do not play music themselves, this may seem perplexing. How is it possible to compose a song, to write music, if you don't know how to read or write it? Wouldn't that be almost an oxymoron? Yet those who are familiar with the world of pop music know that there is a near endless number of pop musicians, from globally known super stars to local folks busking on street corners, who "write" their own music despite the fact that they don't know how to read or write music.

It is helpful to look at the question of how people who can't read music can write it through the "Music As a Second Language" lens. People acquire their first language before they can read or write it. Linguists who study second language learning have found that this same sequence should be employed as we acquire a second language.

Pop musicians who compose without the aid of notation (and here we can safely say that we are speaking of the majority of pop musicians who compose) may be likened to people who have mastered the spoken form of their native tongue, but lack the formal schooling on reading and writing.

What can be especially confusing is that pop artists will often write down the lyrics and/or the chord progression to a song (see Figure A at right). However, this is very different from writing down music. Usually, no melodies, harmonies or rhythms are actually written out. Lyrics are often scrawled out in a hurry so that the composer won't forget the words. The actual music resides in the composers mind.

For example, the melody or harmony of a new composition are things that the pop composer feels confident that they will remember. If they feel that these things are also at risk of being forgotten, a pop musician will be more likely to record a rough take to revive their memory in the future than to write the information out in standard notation. Playing an instrument and reading and writing music aren't prerequisites for composing music."

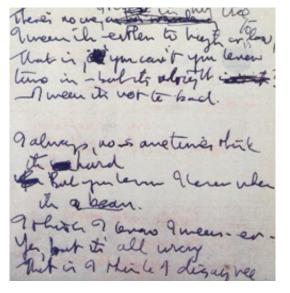


Fig. A - John Lennon wrote down the lyrics to "Strawberry Fields" [above] but he never wrote down the music for this or any other of his hundreds of compositions.

Empowering Your Students to Compose

Remember all the while how important it is to create a safe space in your classroom; one where your students feel comfortable to express themselves musically without judgment, and one where there anxiety levels or "Affective Filters" will be low. This will enable them to generate musical ideas that will quickly morph into music and songs. In some ways, this could be viewed as the musical equivalent of what linguists refer to as Speech Emergence.

Empowering your students to compose is simple and will help ensure that your kids can experience the thrills of songwriting. Here are three easy steps that make composition highly accessible.



Using chords and spontaneously generated lyrics and melodies, compose songs for them. You compose a song, they watch. (The song writing exercises in composition consumables are helpful)



Compose songs with them. Make it a team effort.

STEP

Facilitate improvisation and composition. Give students time and space to compose alone or in groups.

How Do I Use Chords to Write Songs?

By starting with a chord progression, students can use the notes within the chords to compose their melody. As students become comfortable with composition and improvisation, they will begin to hear the notes that work automatically.

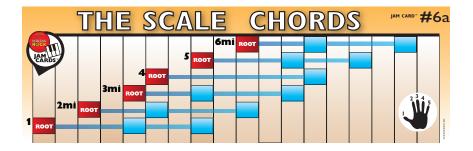
What Comes First, the Lyrics, the Chords, the Idea?

This is a great question and there is no correct answer. All of these are possible entry points and there are no true rules to follow. However, there are some very helpful building blocks that you can provide your students with.

Composing On a Keyboard

Writing a song on keyboard is really easy to do especially when you have an idea of which chords sound good together. This information is easy to see instantly with the help of Jam Card 6a.

This Jam Card shows all the chords that are related to each other in a key at a glance, even if we have no idea what that means! Simply line the start arrow up to any note (C is the easiest because the shape of all the chords stays the same using only white keys) and try out the various chords. The really great thing about this is that these chords are meant to sound good together! That means you can compose a song by putting some of these chords in any order and the results will sound great. There are only six chords—try it using a six side dice—roll the dice to get any four chords and then write a song using the results! If singing over these chords puts your voice in a register that isn't natural or comfortable, simply move the start arrow of the Jam Card to a new starting note and play the chords there (keep in mind that any starting note beside C is going to involve black keys).



This idea of using chords that all come from the same key with the help of this jam card can be expanded. Changing the quality of one of the chords from major to minor or from minor to major can have a really cool effect. Let's say our randomly selected chords were F, C, G, and D minor. Our chord progression would look like this:

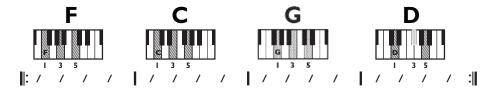


What if we changed the last chord from D minor to D major? Check out how unique and cool the sound of the progression becomes...

WRITING DOWN LYRICS OR CHORD PROGRESSIONS IS VERY DIFFERENT THAN WRITING MUSIC USING STANDARD NOTATION."



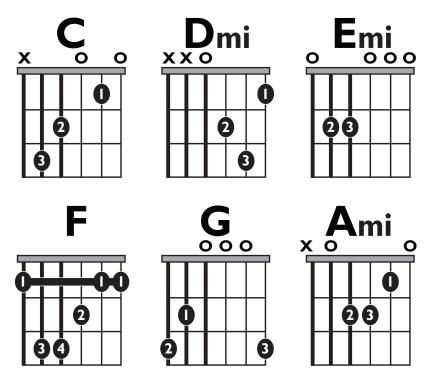
Visit the keyboard section for more info.



Let's try one more. What if we changed the G major to G minor? Once again we've got a chord progression that has a unique and expressive sound, and creating it was easy!



Composing On Guitar



Visit the guitar section for more info.

The same thing is true about chords that go together on the guitar (or any instrument for that matter). Chords that are in the same key can always be arranged in almost any order to sound great. Again we'll use the key of C for this example because most of the chords can be played in open positions.

Mixing these chords up into any order results in good sounding music! The funny thing is that music is designed to work this way—by arranging these chords into compositions we're paying attention to it at the language level.

The only difficulty for new guitarists is playing some of these chords because unlike on keyboard each one requires a completely different shape in open position. The most notoriously difficult here is the F chord, which can be easily substituted in this key for FMaj7, which is a lot easier to play and sounds great. Also, chords that haven't been learned yet can be eliminated altogether, and compositions can be built from only the known chords! Think about the simplicity of some of the most loved songs over the decades—"Who Do You Love" by Bo Diddley (or George Thorogood) being entirely made out of an E chord—"Oye Como Va" by Santanta being only E minor and A—"I've Got a Feeling" by the Black Eyed Peas being G, E minor, and C the entire song. There are tons of great examples of cool songs that work with simple ingredients.

This brings up a very important point: what makes a song made out of the simplest ingredients work? A great first step into composition is listening to the most basic songs and hearing the way contrast is made using rhythm, lyrics, and song form. How are the chorus and verse different from each other in a one chord song like "Lowrider" or "Land of 1,000 Dances"? What does the band do in a simple song to make one section sound more exciting than another? Are some parts intended for vocals while other parts are instrumentals? Purposely using our ears to dig into our favorite music is often the best composition lesson.

Our own personal taste and love for music is illuminated by writing our own songs. Music becomes a language for us that we're learning to speak; composition has a personal an expressive power that is truly unique.



LESSON PLAN: Start With A Rhyme

Objective:

Students will create rhyming song lyrics and compose a melody for them, following specific guidelines.

Resources:

Start with a Rhyme Worksheet, pen, guitar or keyboard

Procedures:

- Begin with a hook: "The words of a song are called lyrics." (Fun Fact: Lyric derives from the Greek word lyrikos, meaning "singing to the lyre". The lyre was a Greek string instrument much like the guitar) To help the students start writing lyrics, start with rhyming words.
- 2 Model the activity for the class. Have the students pick two pairs of rhyming words such as cat, hat.
- 3 "Now that we have all of our rhyming words, can anyone give me a sentence that ends with one of these words?" Repeat this process until you have four sentences.
- 4 Have the whole class read the four sentences aloud in unison. Add a beat to turn it into a rap.
- **5** Now add a simple chord progression. You can improvise a melody for the first line and ask students to echo you. Ask for volunteers to help you with the other lines.
- 6 Distribute the worksheet and have students work in groups of 2-4 to compose their own verse over a chord progression of their choosing, or that you assign. A single chord could work too!
- 7 Have students record and/or perform their ideas for review and assessment.

Extensions:

- 1 If all students use the same progression, combine each groups verse to make a class song!
- 2 Have students adhere to a topic either of your choosing, or of theirs.
- 3 Have students add a second section to their song with a new chord progression, melody and lyrics.

Differentiation:

- Assign roles to the group members. All students can focus on lyrics, 2 on the singing, 2 on playing the chords, etc.
- 2 Allow students to stick with rap as opposed to adding melody

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard #1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #3: Refine and complete artistic work. Anchor Standard #6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. Anchor Standard #8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work Anchor Standard #10: Synthesize and relate knowledge an personal experiences to make art.



LESSON PLAN: Rap Talk

Objective:

Students will freestyle rap focusing only on the rhythm of their speech. They will speak to a beat.

Resources:

Hip-Hop backing track, or a drum track

Procedures:

- 1 Have drum track playing as students enter the room.
- 2 Rap to your students something like, "For the next ten minutes everything we say must be rapped, but do not worry, it doesn't have to rhyme, the only thing to think about is the rhythm of your words." Continue "rap talking" for a minute or so, so that the students get the idea. **Note**: Everything you say to the students from the moment they walk in the door should be "rap talked." This means you are giving your words a musical rhythm that is in sync with the backing track. Do not worry about rhyming.
- Begin to involve the students with questions like, "What is your name?" Students should answer in a complete rapped sentence: "My name is Susan."
- 4 Move on to more open-ended questions such as, "What are you going to do this weekend?" These will require longer rapped responses.
- 6 Now, pair students, and allow them to have "rap conversations" while a backing track plays in the background.
- 6 Give them a topic, and pause the music every 30 second so that they can take turns rapping to each other. After every minute, change the topic about which they are to rap to each other.
- Have student volunteers come up to "freestyle" for their classmates, to close the lesson.

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard #5: Develop and refine artistic work for presentation. Example: MU:Pr5.1.3b – Rehearse to refine technical accuracy, expressive qualities and identified performance challenges. Anchor Standard #1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Example: MU:Cr1.1.5 - Improvise rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic ideas, and explain the connection to specific purpose and context.

Common Core State Standards:

ELA Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration. Example: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1.B: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.



LESSON PLAN: Chord Tic-Tac-Toe

Objective:

Students will play through multiple semi-random combinations of chords, compare their sound, and pick a favorite. They may then use this chord progression as a basis for a song.

Resources:

Chord Tic-Tac-Toe Worksheet for guitars, keyboards, basses, etc.

Procedures:

- Demonstrate the different ways you can play through the progressions. (Each row bottom to top, diagonal bottom to top, each row left to right, each row top to bottom, each row right to left, diagonal top to bottom).
- 2 Avoid playing all of the combinations so that students can explore on their own as well as make their own valued judgments without influence from the entire class.
- 3 Ask students to decide, of the sample progressions you play, which they like the best. Play through them a few times and have them vote.
- 4 After it is decided, ask them to turn and talk to their neighbor and explain why they like one better than the other. How does each feel? What does it make you think of? What is the mood?
- **5** Have students select either keyboard or guitar, and with a partner, play through ALL of the chord progressions.
- 6 After about 20 minutes, have volunteer students play through their favorite progression for the class.

Extensions:

- Ear Training: Have students look away while volunteers play their chosen progression. Give other students 2 minutes to play though the progressions and see if they can guess the one that was played.
- 2 Advanced Ear Training: Have student look away while volunteers play their chosen progression. Ask other students which progression was played but don't allow them to play as they formulate their response.
- 3 Combine 2 different lines to make an 8 measure chord progression!

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard #9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. Example: MU:Re9.1.5a – Evaluate musical works and performances, applying established criteria, and explain appropriateness to the context, citing evidence from the elements of music. Anchor Standard #5: Develop and refine artistic work for presentation. Example: MU:Pr5.1.3b – Rehearse to refine technical accuracy, expressive qualities and identified performance challenges.



LESSON PLAN: Hip Hop Hamburger

Objective:

Students will compose their own "Hook" and "Rap" around a chosen topic, while gaining an understanding of ABA structure, AABB rhyme patterns, and phrase length.

Resources:

Backing track, pen, paper, worksheet, checklist.

Procedures:

- 1 Create a completed project based on the worksheet directions that you can perform for your students as an example.
- 2 Perform your Hip Hop Hamburger at the beginning of the class session.
- **3** Distribute two worksheets. One that is completed by you, and a blank one.
- 4 Explain and model the ABA structure of the whole song.
- 5 Explain and model the rhyme scheme (AABB)
- 6 Explain and model 4 beats per line by counting with your fingers as you go through a few phrases. Show what it would sound like if you didn't fit them correctly.
- Allow students to choose whether they want to focus on creating "hooks" or "verses". Group accordingly, having two hook writers and two verse writers per group, or 1 and 1 depending on your class.

Differentiation:

Some students will not need as strict of parameters because of a familiarity or a natural understanding of the rhythm and structure of rap. Give these students more freedom if you believe they can benefit from it. Parameters are meant to help students get started, not as a limitation. Simplify the activity by cutting the hook to 4 measures and the rap to 8 measures.

PARAMETERS ARE MEANT TO HELP STUDENTS TO GET STARTED NOT AS A LIMITATION."

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard #1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #3: Refine and complete artistic work. Anchor Standard #5: Develop and refine artistic works for presentation. Anchor Standard #8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. Anchor Standard #7: Perceive and analyze artistic work Responding - Anchor Standard #10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Common Core State Standards: ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2 – 5.6



LESSON PLAN: Chord Tone Melodies

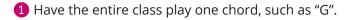
Objective:

Students will compose and transcribe a melody to sing by selecting chord tones from a given set of chords.

Resources:

Blank tablature, staff paper, and or regular paper, pencils, guitars

Procedures:



- 2 Do a call and response rhythm on each note/string of the "G" chord, from the low E string to the high E string, singing and playing at the same time. This will be a good vocal exploration inviting students to go into their falsetto range.
- 3 Follow steps 1 and 2 using a second chord, such as "C".
- 4 Now have students strum the G chord for 1 measure, and then the C chord for 1 measure. While they are doing that, isolate the notes on the high E string for each chord, and sing and play them with a rhythm.
- 5 Now do the same thing on the B string, and then on the G string.
- 6 Explain to your students that you chose a string from each chord as your melody note. First you used the notes that were on the E string, then the notes that were on the B string, and the the G, etc.
- Instruct students to finger each chord as if they were going to strum, but only play the high E string. Give them a rhythm to use, going from G chord to C chord. Now do the same with the B string, and finally the G string.
- 8 Now instruct them to sing and play those tones at the same time.
- Improvise some simple lyrics to the resulting melody.

Independent Work:

- COMPOSITION
- 1 Distribute tablature paper, staff paper, or blank paper.
- 2 With partners, Instruct students to compose a melody using any two chords of their choosing, but sticking to only one string of their choosing. (You can try also with two strings, or to add non chord tones. Differentiate accordingly)
- **3** One partner plays the chords and the other plays the single string, and then they switch roles.
- 4 Write down their melody, and try to give it some simple lyrics.

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard #5: Develop and refine artistic work for presentation. Example: MU:Pr5.1.3b – Rehearse to refine technical accuracy, expressive qualities and identified performance challenges. Anchor Standard #1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Example: MU:Cr1.1.5 - Improvise rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic ideas, and explain the connection to specific purpose and context.



LESSON PLAN: Colored Squares

Objective:

Students will combine the free write process with guided composition parameters to create song lyrics.

Resources:

Four 5"x5" colored squares made of construction paper, and stapled together for each student; pens

Procedures:

- 1 Distribute a colored square packet to each student.
- Play a chord progression, riff, or song example and after a minute or two tell students to write down one word at the top of the first colored square, that the music makes them think of or feel.
- 3 Tell the students that they must now take 60 seconds to write about this word on the first square.
- 4 Tell students to take one word from the first square and to write it at the top of the second square.
- 5 Tell them that they now have 60 seconds to write about this second word on their second square.
- 6 Repeat the process until all four squares are filled.
- 7 Ask student volunteers to share.
- 8 Encourage students to use this material as the basis of a song.



COMPOSITION

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard #1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #3: Refine and complete artistic work. Anchor Standard #5: Develop and refine artistic works for presentation. Anchor Standard #8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. Anchor Standard #7: Perceive and analyze artistic work Responding - Anchor Standard #10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Common Core State Standards: ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2 – 5.6



LESSON PLAN: Ideas from the Class

Objective:

Students will use information from their history class to write a song

Resources:

Pencil, Paper and IDEAS!

Procedures:

- Have the students tell you what topics they are learning about in their History class. Hint: Talk to the History teacher ahead of time to learn what topic they are covering. Ask if there are any terms that relate to the topic.
- Pass out small slips of paper and have the students write down the words they are studying in relationship to the topic. (ex. Moon Landing-rocket, moon, astronauts, etc...) This is one way to get everyone to participate and the lesson is not dominated by one or two students.
- 3 Next have the students call out the terms and write them on the board. Form the words into rhyming words.
- 4 Use the rhyming words to form a poem.

Extensions:

- 1 If you pick a song that has an easy chord progression, have the students play along with the rhyming words.
- 2 Choose strum patterns from the teacher manual.

Just for FUN!

Have the students present their poems or songs to the history teacher.

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

National Core Arts Standards (Music) Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Cr1.1.H.5a (Novice) Generate melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic ideas for simple melodies (such as two-phrase) and chordal accompaniments for given melodies. Anchor Standard 11: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. Example: General Music MU:Cn11.1.(PK-8) Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life. (also applies in other strands at the high school level) Common Core CorrelationCCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.





COMPOSITION

LESSON PLAN: Everyone Likes Singing a Parody

Objective:

Students will create an educational parody based on a popular song they already know and like.

Resources:

Pre-screened recording of student's song choice, lyric sheet of their song choice, parody writing worksheet (see next page)

Procedures:

- 1 Divide students into small groups of 2-4 members.
- 2 Distribute Parody Writing Worksheet.
- 8 Review the worksheet with the students (see worksheet with directions below)
- 4 As soon as students choose their songs, if possible print them on the spot, or before the next class period
- **6** Allow students time to listen to the original song and replace the lyrics with new ones.
- 6 Circulate room and help groups as needed
- Students will record or perform their parodies for their classmates.

Note:

This project may take up to 3 hours or more to complete.

Variation:

Grouping choices can either be made by the students or you can strategically place more advanced student with those that may struggle with such an activity. You can keep the rewrite loose, and treat it as a great way to make singing fun and appealing, or you can use it for its ELA connections. For the latter, you can have students match up every syllable in their rewrite, graphing out the connections!

Worksheet on next page.

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard #1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #3: Refine and complete artistic work. Anchor Standard #4: Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation. Anchor Standard #5: Develop and refine artistic works for presentation. Anchor Standard #8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. Anchor Standard #7: Perceive and analyze artistic work Responding - Anchor Standard #10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. Connecting – Anchor Standard #10



LESSON PLAN: Mystery Song

Objective:

Students will learn how to write a song based on the pattern of a known song

Resources:

Any Instrument

Procedures:

- Have the students make a list of songs that they already know. This would be a great use of a "song suggestion box" in front of the room. You will always have ones to choose from and they will love being able to suggest songs.
- 2 Choose (5) songs from the list that the students provided.
- Play the chord progression for the students and see if they can recognize the song from the list. You can make a game out of it like Bingo.
- Once the students recognize the pattern, have them play it on their instrument.

Extensions:

- Have one of the student's play the chord progressions and the others guess which song it is. This can be done in small groups or by rotating the student demonstrating the song.
- 2 Choose strum patterns from the teacher manual.

Just for FUN!

Make a challenge out of it and keep a class leaderboard for the students.



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

National Core Arts Standards (Music) Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Cr3.1.H.5a (Novice) Apply teacher-provided criteria to critique, improve, and refine drafts of simple melodies (such as two-phrase) and chordal accompaniments for given melodies. Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1.b Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.



LESSON PLAN: Mix and Match Chords

Objective:

Students will make artistic choices about chord combinations in order to compose a song.

Resources:

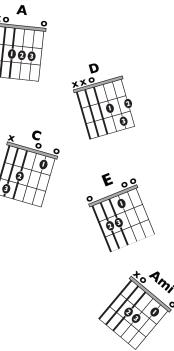
Pencil, Paper, Guitars, Keyboard.

Procedures:

- Have the students write down all the chords they know. Hint: You can do this as a class with you writing them on each slip of paper or have the students do it.
- Pick one of the chords and play it using one of the rhythms that the class already knows. Repeat this step until you have (4) chords chosen.
- 3 Once the students are comfortable with the chord pattern. Remove one of the chords and choose a new one.
- 4 Have the students compare the new one to the old one and ask which they liked better. Will it sound better in another part of your song?

Extensions:

- Record the song using one of the devices available to you (i.e. Smartphone, PC or other recording device)
- 2 Make the rhythms more complex by trying something new like the Reggae rhythm from the teacher manual.





National Core Arts Standards (Music):

National Core Arts Standards (Music) Anchor Standard 1: Generate and Conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Cr1.1.H.Ia (High School Proficient) Generate melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic ideas for improvisations, compositions (forms such as theme and variation or 12-bar blues), and three-or-more-chord accompaniments in a variety of patterns (such as arpeggio, country and gallop strumming, finger picking patterns).Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Cr2.1.H.5a (Novice) Select, develop, and use standard notation or audio/video recording to document melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic ideas for drafts of simple melodies (such as two-phrase) and chordal accompaniments for given melodies.Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1.b Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.



LESSON PLAN: Composing With Chord Tones

Objective:

Students will improve their technique while composing short chord tone patterns and employing iconographic notation to document their creations.

Resources:

Guitars, Pencil, Paper

Vocabulary:

Arpeggio - playing chord tones in succession instead of all together.

Procedures:

- Demonstrate some arpeggio patterns using one or more chords. Pretend to have poor technique preventing you from performing the intended pattern and show the steps necessary to fix it (press harder, closer to fret, fingertips at 90 degree angle to fretboard, thumb straight up and down on the back of the neck, etc.)
- 2 Tell students they will create their own patterns using a progression of chords or a single chord (differentiate according to age and level).
- **3** Patterns can be 1-2 measures long.
- 4 Students can transcribe their patterns using the following iconographic notation: Name of chord, followed by the string number played. (Ex. D 112 123) Represent space in sound, or lack of space by how close together you put the numbers.

Extensions:

- 1 You can do this with multiple instruments.
- 2 Students can also sing the arpeggio patterns while they play them.
- Students can add words to the tones, and it can become a song!

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard #1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #3: Refine and complete artistic work. Anchor Standard #4: Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation. Anchor Standard #5: Develop and refine artistic works for presentation. Anchor Standard #8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. Anchor Standard #7: Perceive and analyze artistic work

Responding - Anchor Standard #10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.



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LESSON PLAN: Composing a 12 Bar Blues Song

Objective:

Students will understand the phrase structure of a 12 bar blues lyric and the concept of AAB and Call and Response. They will demonstrate learning by composing an original blues lyric.

Resources:

Blues Lyric Worksheet, sample recording of "Hound Dog" by Big Mama Thornton and Elvis, whiteboard or projector to show lead sheet

Procedures:

- Play both recordings of "Hound Dog" for your students and discuss differences.
- 2 Teach them how to sing the song and sing through it a few times. Stick with a couple of verses for ease and to save time. Accompany yourself and the class with a backing track or guitar or piano.
- 3 Explain the concept of "Call and Response" and AAB. The call of the first line is: "You ain't nothin' but a hound dog" and the response is "Been Snooping 'round my door." This whole line fits over the first 4 bars of the 12 bar form. It repeats for the second 4 bars. These are the two "A" lines. The call of the B line is "You can wag your tail" and the response is "But I ain't gonna feed you no more." This line fits over the last 4 bars of the 12 bar form.
- 4 You should write the lyrics under a lead sheet showing how they line up with the musical form.
- Once you are sure students are familiar with the concepts, distribute the "Lyric Writing Worksheet."
- 6 Have students complete worksheet independently for Part A, and with a partner for Part B.
- Have students perform their work either privately or for the class!

Extensions:

- 1 Record and submit to the Little Kids Rock Songwriting Exhibition!
- Other good examples of 12 bar blues are "Crossroads" by Eric Clapton and "The Thrill is Gone" by B.B. King. There is an excellent version of Solange doing this as a duet with B.B. King on YouTube.

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard #1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #3: Refine and complete artistic work. Anchor Standard #4: Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation. Anchor Standard #5: Develop and refine artistic works for presentation. Anchor Standard #8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. Anchor Standard #7: Perceive and analyze artistic work Responding - Anchor Standard #10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to

Responding - Anchor Standard #10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

COMPOSITION

LESSON PLAN: Rapping with End Rhymes

Objective:

Students will be able to improvise and/or compose a narrative using a given set of "end-rhymes".

Resources:

Hip Hop backing track, or live beat boxing, end rhyme sheet, pen and paper

Procedures:

- 1 Write down a few sets of end rhymes on the board.
- Play a hip hop backing track a comfortable tempo and instruct students to say a word on every 4th beat. Ex: 1 2 3 Cat, 1 2 3 Hat, 1 2 3 Rat....
- 3 Eventually, add a narrative before each end rhyme. Ex: I walked across the street and saw a CAT, It was really cool with its backwards HAT, It was feeling really hungry and hunting for a RAT...
- 4 Ask for a student volunteer to do the same thing with a different set of end rhymes while the rest of the class says the end rhyme on the fourth beat.
- **5** Pair students up around the class and have them do this activity one says the end rhymes and the other raps and then switch.

Extensions:

- 1 Have students write out a narrative before performing, making it less of an improvisation and more of a composition.
- 2 Have students create their own end rhymes.

Sample End Rhymes

Cat	Ate
Hat	Date
Mat	Fate
Rat	Mate
Flow	Ate
Know	Date
Glow	Fate
Grow	Mate

Anchor Standard #5: Develop and refine artistic work for presentation. Example: MU:Pr5.1.3b – Rehearse to refine technical accuracy, expressive qualities and identified performance challenges. Anchor Standard #1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Example: MU:Cr1.1.5 - Improvise rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic ideas, and explain the connection to specific purpose and context.



COMPOSITION

COMPOSITION CONSUMABLES

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WORKSHEET: Parody Writing

Directions:

Work in small groups to create a parody about any topic you have learned about this school year in Math, Language Arts, Social Studies or Science. To make a parody, simply replace the original lyrics of the song with lyrics of your own. Each group will have two class periods to finish their lyrics. The following music class will be designated for practicing and performing the finished parody.

Step1: Choose a popular song that your group already knows.

Song Title: _____

_____ Artist: _____

Step 2: Choose a topic from another school subject that you would like to make your song about.

Step 3: Write the new lyrics to your song, making sure they line up with the original song lyrics.

Original Lyrics

Parody Lyrics



WORKSHEET: 12 Bar Blues

Name:	: Date:				
Example from "Hound Dog" performed by Big Mama Thornton					
Verse 1					
(A)	You ain't nothing but a hound dog, been snoopin' round m Call Response	y <u>door</u>			
(A)) You ain't nothing but a hound dog, been snoopin' round m Call Response	y <mark>door</mark>			
(B)	You can wag your tail, but I ain't gonna feed you no <u>more</u> Call Response				
Verse 2	2				
(A)	You told me you was high class, I could see through <u>that</u> Call Response				
(A)) You told me you was high class, I could see through <u>that</u> Call Response				
(B)	And baby I know, you ain't no real cool <u>cat</u> Call Response				

Part A – Independently

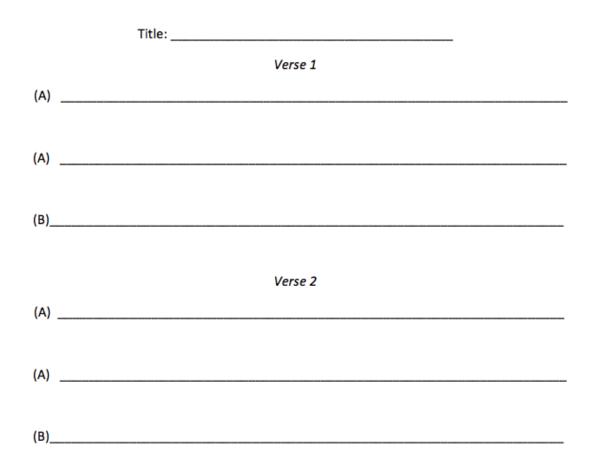
Complete the following blues verse. Write the third line of lyrics that is about the same length as the first two and includes a call and response. Make sure the last word of the third line rhymes with the last word of the first two lines (" \underline{do} ").

- (A) I feel so sad and lonely, don't know what I'm gonna do
- (A) I feel so sad and lonely, don't know what I'm gonna do
- (B)

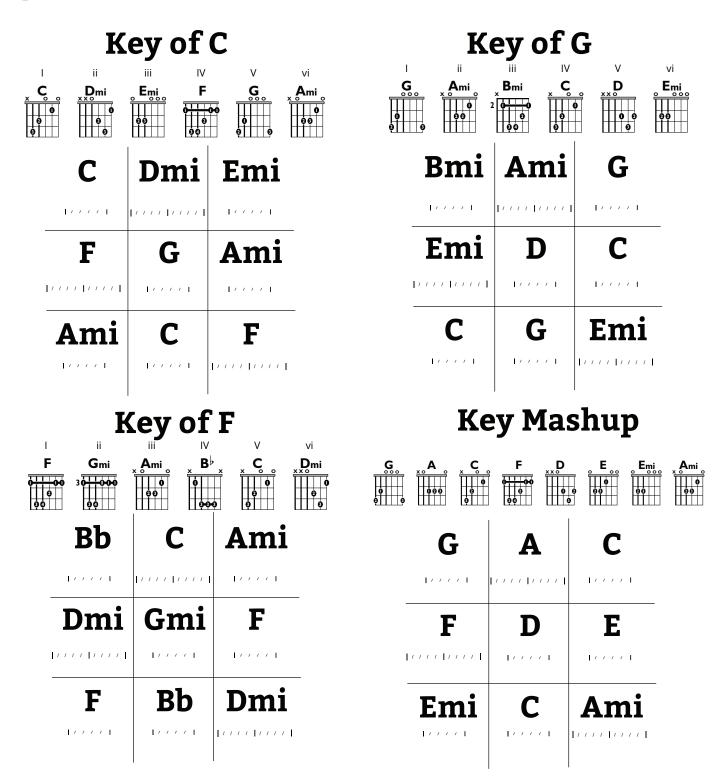


Part B – With a Partner

Now, with a partner, write your own blues lyrics. The words of the first two lines should be identical. The third line, however, should be different from the first two lines. Remember, the LAST WORD of the three lines of each verse should RHYME. Please do this for both verses. Lyrics must be school appropriate. *Each pair can perform their blues lyrics with the music.*



WORKSHEET: Chord Tic-Tac-Toe

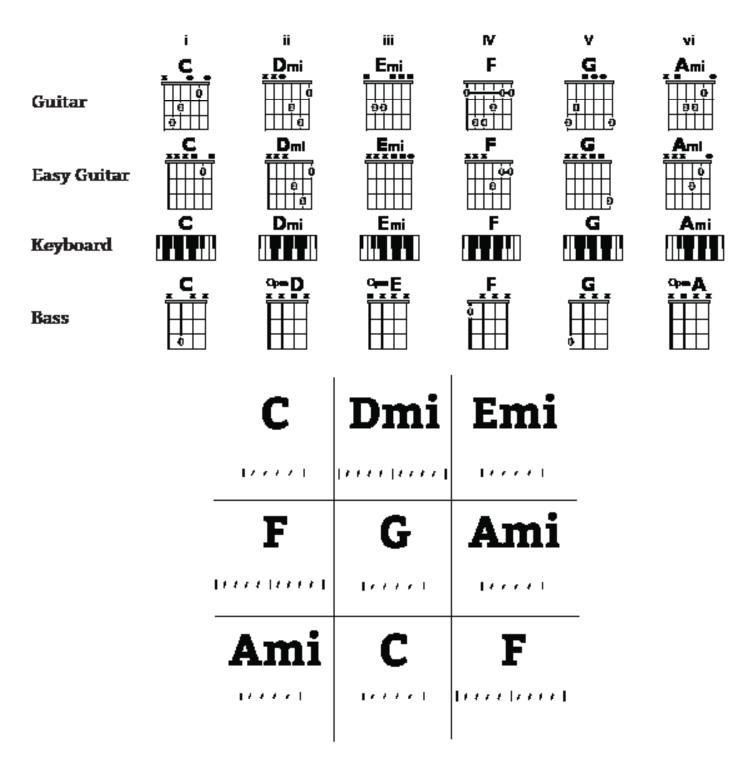


Directions

- 1. Pick a tic-tac-toe board!
- 2. Go in all directions to play each combination of 3 chord/4 measure progressions, and pick a favorite! ↑ K ← K ↓ ↓ → オ
- Note: Try to find the three bar pattern. How does it sound?
- 3. Try to combine 2 lines to make a longer 6 chord/8 measure progression!
- 4. Add lyrics and a melody to make a song.



WORKSHEET: Chord Tic-Tac-Toe

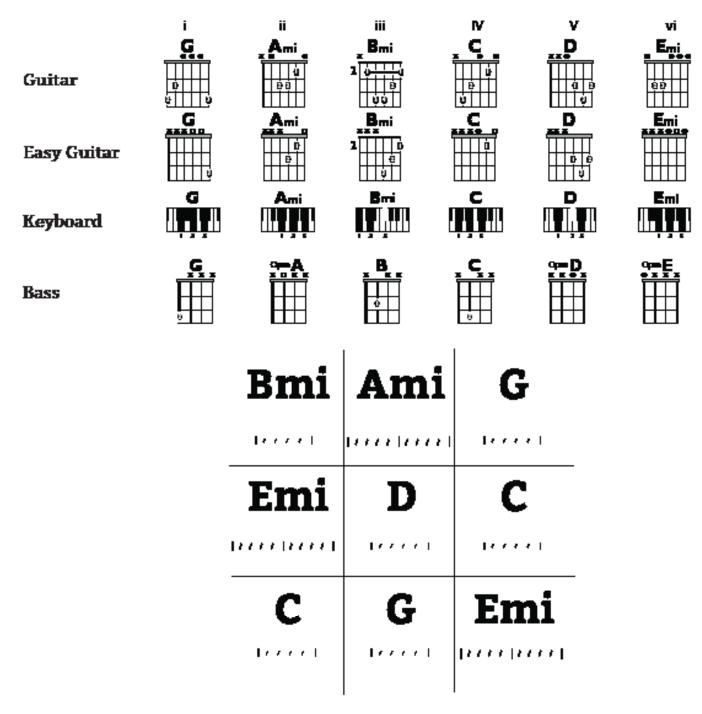


Directions

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- Add lyrics and a melody to make a song.



WORKSHEET: Chord Tic-Tac-Toe

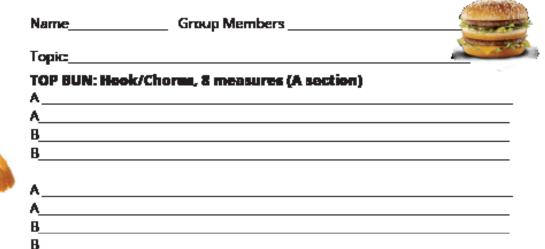


Directions

- 1. Go in all directions to play each combination of 3 chord/4 measure progressions, and pick a favorite! ↑Kモビリンラオ Note: Try to find the three bar pattern. How does it sound?
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- 3. Add lyrics and a melody to make a song.



WORKSHEET: Hip Hop Hamburger



MEAT/CHEESE: Rap/Verse, 16 measures (8 section)

A,	
A	
В	
Б	

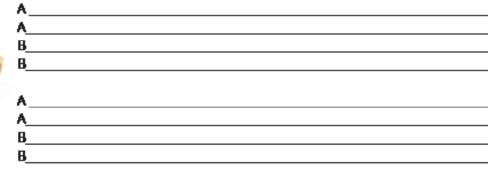


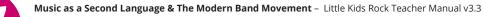
B

R	
B	
Α	
B	
в	
A	
_	

BOTTOM BUN: Hook/Chorus, 8 measures (A section)

B_____



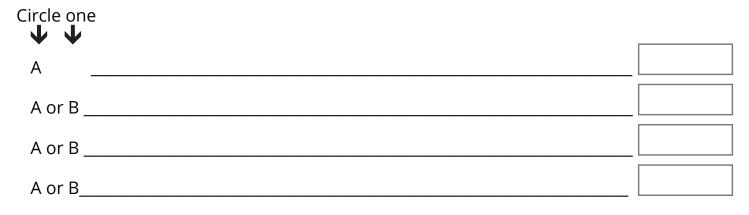


WORKSHEET: Start With a Rhyme

Name_____ Bandmates_____

Directions:

- 1. Choose a rhyme scheme (AABB, ABAB, or AAAA)
- 2. Start by choosing rhyming words to put in the boxes. The "A" lines must rhyme, and the "B" lines must rhyme.
- 3. Now make sentences that end in those words (Tip: Keep each sentence about the same length)
- 4. Give your words some rhythm and melody to make it a song!



A	
A or B _	
A or B _	
A or B_	



WORKSHEET: Ideas from Class

Pick something that you learned about in school that you thought was cool. Write a short poem about that topic. Can you set it to music?

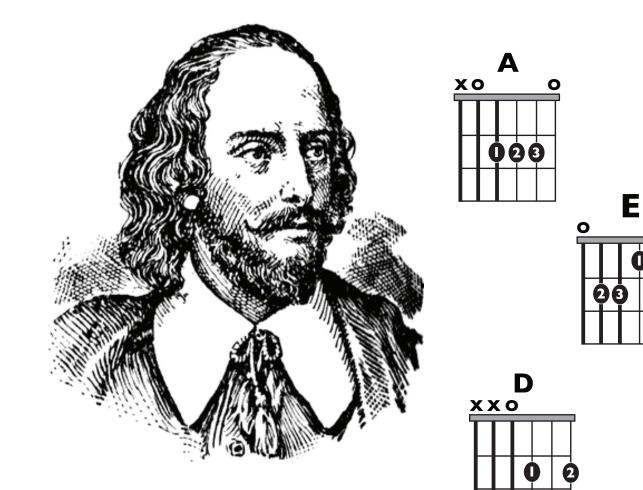




WORKSHEET: Pick a Rhyme

Pick a nice passage from a rhyming work (maybe something by Shakespeare or even Dr. Suess).

Next, pick a chord progression. Try playing the progression and singing the passage on top of it.



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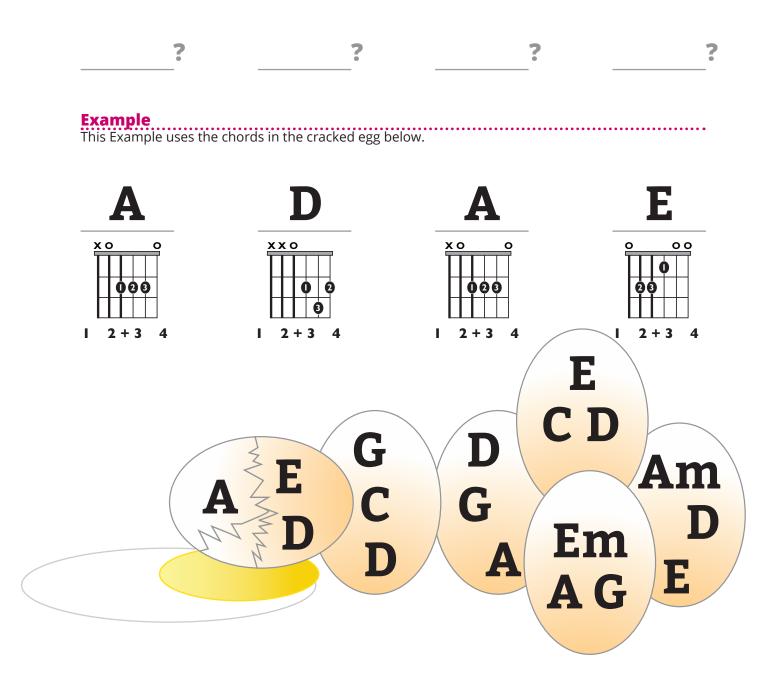


Scrambled Chords... Yum!

When you scramble an egg, you don't worry too much about what part goes where. You just stir it up!

Lots of rock, blues, metal, punk and country songs have just three chords. If you pick the right three chords, it doesn't matter what order you put them in. They will sound good.

Take a look at the eggs below. Each one has a set of three chords that go great together. Pick one egg and crack it open. Spread the three chords all over the next page in any order you like. Then play it with any rhythm you like. Fill in the blanks for the chords and rhythm. Try to think of 4 and 8 measure patterns.





WORKSHEET: Scrambled Chords

