Musical Wonders

SONGWRITING FOR THE MUSIC CLASSROOM

"If you have a weakness, turn it into a hook" - *Allee Willis*

You are a Songwriter

Songwriting is for everybody. When we were all three years old, we walked around our homes singing and making up songs. It was as natural as breathing, walking, and thinking.

The goal of this curriculum and these materials is to help us reconnect with our inner songwriters. The gift of musical expression is our birthright as human beings and this journey can be a gift in our lives and the lives of our students.

In this booklet you will find handouts, tools, and projects for songwriting. These can be used in any class and you can incorporate as much or as little technology as you choose.

When it comes to song formulas, instructions, and handouts, these are tools. They are not rules that must be followed, but structures that will guarantee some level of success. They are a way to get started, but they are not the "law of the land." Experimentation and breaking convention is highly encouraged!

Finally, it is my hope that you will share with us how you utilize these tools so that we can continue to improve our mission of demystifying songwriting and encouraging creative music making

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Curriculum Overview

GOALS AND AMBITIONS

This curriculum seeks to foster creative music making and self-expression. How good a student is at songwriting is not the point. We encourage a process based approach. If a student engages in the songwriting process, over time their output will improve. However, by focusing on the qualitative output it is very easy to derail a student's motivation and end their songwriting journey. Process over product.

STUDIO MODEL / PROJECT BASED LEARNING

The best way to learn songwriting is to write songs. These materials are all meant to be in service of actual songwriting. It is recommended that teachers introduce an idea or prompt to students and then give them plenty of time to experiment.

SEQUENCING OF LESSONS

The lessons presented here can be done in sequential order. The amount of knowledge and choice expected of the student expands in each lesson. However, feel free to experiment. Every music class is different and there is no reason that you can't take this a la carte and pick and choose when, where, and what for your students.

INSTRUMENTS, DAWS, AND OTHER EQUIPMENT

The use of instruments, DAWs, and other equipment is fantastic. However, if you want to focus primarily on lyric writing, all activities can be done with pen and pencil and you simply sing the lyrics or stop before putting lyrics to music. Obviously, the best case scenario is for students to have access to instruments and technology. Simply having a phone with a piano app and Garage Band / Band Lab / Soundtrap offers a great deal of possibility.

ADAPTING MATERIALS

These materials are meant to be used in your class however you see fit. Change examples, adjust the sequence, and whatever else you need to do to make this work for your students.

Musical Wonders

LESSON PLANS

"If you have a weakness, turn it into a hook." - Allee Willis

Write Your First Verse - Overview

This lesson is designed to make the introduction to songwriting fun and stress-free for your students. It's all about sparking creativity and building confidence without the pressure of perfection.

Lesson Highlights:

Low-Stakes Environment: The focus is on enjoyment and creativity. Students can write about anything that interests them, from their pets to their favorite foods or daily activities. There are no wrong answers, making it a perfect entry point for all students.

Simple Structure: Students will write just four lines of lyrics, with only the second and fourth lines needing to rhyme (ABCB rhyme scheme). This straightforward approach helps students focus on expressing their ideas without getting bogged down by complex rhyme schemes.

Interactive Demonstration: Start with a live demo where you create a verse with the class. This not only shows them how it's done but also encourages participation and makes the process less intimidating.

Hands-On Practice: Students will work individually or in groups to write their verses. They can then experiment by singing their lyrics over background tracks, using a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW), or with live instruments, allowing them to find what works best for their unique style.

Supportive Atmosphere: Emphasize experimentation and personal expression. Encourage students to try different melodies and rhythms, fostering a supportive environment where they can explore their musical ideas freely.

By the end of this lesson, your students will have created their own verses, ready to be sung and shared. This project not only introduces them to the basics of songwriting but also builds their confidence and enthusiasm for music.

Write Your First Verse - Lesson Plan

Objective:
Students will learn the basics of writing a verse for a song by choosing a topic, writing four lines of lyrics, and experimenting with an ABCB rhyme scheme.

Materials Needed:
1. Handouts for students with instructions
2. Background tracks for singing (can be pre-recorded or played live)
3. Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) access (optional)
4. Instruments for live performance (optional)
5. Whiteboard and markers

Lesson Activities:

Introduction
Begin with a brief discussion on songwriting. Explain that a song typically has different parts like verses and choruses. Today, they will focus on writing their first verse.
Introduce the concept of rhyme schemes, specifically the ABCB rhyme scheme.

Live Demonstration
The teacher will ask for the students to suggest topics about which they will collectively write a song. After choosing a topic, the teacher will lead a quick songwriting session. Ask the students to describe the topic and simply put these descriptions into sentences. Emphasize the process of choosing words that rhyme for the second and fourth lines (ABCB rhyme scheme).
Encourage full class participation by asking students for suggestions and ideas during the demonstration. Sing the completed verse over a background track, demonstrating how to match lyrics with the music.

Student Activity
Distribute the handouts to students. Students will choose their topics and write four lines of lyrics, ensuring the second and fourth lines rhyme. Students can work individually or in groups.

Performance Practice
Students will practice singing their verses over provided background tracks, into a DAW, or with live instruments. Encourage students to experiment with different melodies and rhythms as they sing.

Write Your First Verse - Lesson Plan Cont.

Sharing
Volunteers can share their verses with the class. Encourage positive engagement. Feedback is not really important right now, just engagement with the process. If students are timid, ask if anyone will allow you to simply read their lyrics.

Reflection:
Discuss what students found challenging or enjoyable about writing their first verse. Encourage students to continue writing and experimenting with their songwriting skills beyond the classroom.

National Core Arts Standards Alignment:
Creating (MU.1.5a): Students will generate musical ideas for various purposes and contexts.
Performing (MU.2.5a): Students will demonstrate the ability to read and perform music.
Responding (MU.1.5a): Students will perceive and analyze music.
Connecting (MU.0.5a): Students will synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.

Additional Tips and Tricks:
1. Practice this activity ahead of time so that you are comfortable singing to the track. Don't worry about how good it is, just get comfortable. Greatness comes in revision and that's not the point of this activity.

2. Have extra copies and allow students to do the activity several times if they are fast. This is designed to be quick and easy.

3. Any rhyme works. Slant rhymes are fine, it does not have to be perfect.

4. If students are interested in writing more than just one verse or experimenting, let them do it! It's also okay if they want to break the formula and choose a different rhyme scheme. Just make sure they are aware of what they are doing so that they can use these tools intentionally.

5. Have fun! If you are not having fun you are doing it wrong.

Write your first verse

Let's not over-complicate this! We're going to write our very first verse using only one rhyme.

CHOOSE A TOPIC

This song can be about whatever you want. It could be your pet, your favorite food, what you did yesterday. It really doesn't matter. Write your topic in the blank space:

TOPIC:

WRITE THE SONG

Now you are going to write four lines of a song. Each line can be a sentence of just a few words. Experiment and listen for natural pauses as you speak/sing your words.

The last word on the two lines with the * should rhyme with each other. No other rhymes are necessary. This is called an **ABCB** rhyme scheme.

A

B *

C

B *

Songwriter Swap - Overview

Overview

Students pick a rhyme scheme, write a line and then trade papers with another student and continue until all students have written four lines. This activity is designed to introduce students to various rhyme schemes in a low-stakes, engaging environment where creativity takes center stage. The lesson encourages students to experiment with lyric writing without worrying about perfection or the final outcome.

Lesson Highlights:

Low-Stakes Environment: This lesson focuses on creativity and collaboration, allowing students to write lyrics freely. They won't need to worry about what comes next in the verse, as each line will be written by a different student.

Introduction to Rhyme Schemes: Students will explore four different rhyme schemes (ABCB, ABAB, AABB, AAAA) through a hands-on activity. This helps them understand how rhyme patterns can shape a song's structure.

Collaborative Writing: Students will select a rhyme scheme and start by writing the first line of a four-line verse. They will then pass their paper to a random classmate, who will add the next line, continuing until all four lines are written by four different students. This encourages teamwork and creative thinking.

Engaging and Interactive: The lesson begins with a brief review of rhyme schemes, followed by a collaborative writing activity. Students will read their completed verses aloud, fostering a sense of community and shared accomplishment.

Supportive Atmosphere: The collaborative nature of the activity ensures that no single student is responsible for the entire verse, reducing pressure and allowing for a more relaxed and enjoyable learning experience.

By the end of this lesson, your students will have a deeper understanding of different rhyme schemes and the collaborative process of songwriting. They'll also gain confidence in their creative abilities, knowing they can contribute to a song without needing to worry about every detail.

Songwriter Swap - Lesson Plan

Objective:
Students will explore different rhyme schemes and collaborate to write four-line verses, enhancing their understanding of lyrical structure and creativity in songwriting.

Materials Needed:
1. Handouts with rhyme scheme instructions
2. Pencils/pens
3. Background tracks or instruments (optional)
4. Whiteboard and markers

Lesson Activities:

Introduction:
Briefly review the concept of rhyme schemes, discussing how they shape the structure of lyrics.
Introduce the four rhyme schemes: ABCB, ABAB, AABB, and AAAA, explaining each with simple examples.

Handout Distribution:
Distribute the handouts that outline the four rhyme schemes. Ensure each student understands the task: they will select one rhyme scheme and write a four-line song collaboratively with their peers, but they will only be writing the first line right not. MAKE SURE STUDENTS PUT THEIR NAME ON THE HANDOUT!

Collaborative Writing Activity
Students choose a rhyme scheme and write the first line of their four-line song on their handout. After writing the first line, students pass their paper to a random classmate (or more orderly if you prefer). It is recommended that you time each line writing session as well as timing the passing of papers. A few minutes to write and thirty seconds to pass papers is usually enough.

Each student writes the second line on the new paper they receive, following the chosen rhyme scheme. Continue passing the papers until all four lines are written by four different students. Ensure students understand they need to follow the selected rhyme scheme throughout the process.

Songwriter Swap - Lesson Plan Cont.

Reading and Discussion
Students receive their original papers back with the completed four-line song. Have students put a title on their song based on the finished product.

Each student reads their collaboratively written verse aloud to the class or in small groups. Facilitate a discussion on the experience, focusing on how the different contributions shaped the final product. Encourage students to share their thoughts on working with different rhyme schemes and collaborating with peers.

Reflection
Conclude with a brief reflection, asking students what they learned about rhyme schemes and the collaborative process. Ask them if they found this process easier or harder than simply writing the song themselves. Discuss how they can use different rhyme schemes in their future songwriting projects.

Extension
Encourage students to experiment with putting these lyrics over a chord progression. If possible provide time to do so. This is also a great time to experiment with having an AI application set the lyrics.

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Responding (MU.1.5a): Students will perceive and analyze music.
Connecting (MU.0.5a): Students will synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.

Additional Tips and Tricks:
1. Work hard to keep the tone of this activity light and playful.

2. The timer is your friend. Get students focused on getting "something" down, even if it's not perfect.

3. Be ready to help students with rhymes if they get stuck. There is nothing wrong with using a rhyming dictionary or other tools.

Songwriter Swap

Write your name here:

_____

CHOOSE A RHYME SCHEME

A B C B	**A A B B**
A B A B	**A A A A**

WRITE 1 LINE OF THE SONG (THEN SWITCH)

WRITE THE TITLE OF THE SONG WHEN IT RETURNS TO YOU:

Love Song About That Thing I Like - Overview

This lesson is designed to introduce students to the verse-chorus structure, emphasizing the use of repetition in the chorus and experimenting with different rhyme schemes. It's a low-stakes, fun activity that allows students to express their creativity and learn about song structure in a supportive environment.

Lesson Highlights:

Low-Stakes Creativity: Students can freely explore their creativity by choosing any topic they like. The focus is on expressing their ideas and having fun with the songwriting process without worrying about perfection.

Introduction to Verse-Chorus Structure: This lesson provides a clear introduction to the fundamental song structure, helping students understand the roles of the verse and chorus in a song.

Rhyme Scheme Practice: Students will select a rhyme scheme for their verse, encouraging them to experiment with different lyrical patterns and understand how rhyme schemes influence the flow of a song.

Repetition in the Chorus: The chorus-writing formula emphasizes repetition, a key element in creating memorable songs. Students will learn how to effectively use repetition to enhance their songwriting.

Collaborative and Interactive: Students will write a four-line verse and a structured chorus, then share their work with the class. This encourages peer feedback and fosters a collaborative learning environment.

By the end of this lesson, your students will have a solid understanding of verse-chorus structure, rhyme schemes, and the importance of repetition in songwriting. They'll gain confidence in their creative abilities and be able to apply these concepts in their future songwriting projects.

Love Song About That Thing I Like - Lesson Plan

Objective:
Students will learn the basics of verse-chorus structure in songwriting, focusing on using repetition in the chorus and experimenting with different rhyme schemes. They will write a love song about a chosen topic, developing both a verse and a chorus.

Materials Needed:
1. Handouts with instructions for writing the verse and chorus
2. Pencils/pens
3. Background tracks or instruments (optional)
4. Whiteboard and markers

Lesson Activities:

Introduction
Begin with a discussion on the structure of a song, focusing on the difference between a verse and a chorus. Explain the importance of repetition in a chorus and how it helps make a song memorable.

Handout Love Song About That Thing I Like Song Formula Handout

Choosing a Topic and Rhyme Scheme for the Verse
Have students choose a topic they like. It could be anything from a favorite food to a hobby.
Students will then select a rhyme scheme for their verse (e.g., ABCB, ABAB, AABB, AAAA).

Writing the Verse
Students will write a four-line verse describing their topic without giving away what it is. Emphasize the use of descriptive language to create intrigue and set the stage for the chorus. Ask them to describe the topic, describe how it makes them fell, or what it is used for.

Love Song About That Thing I Like - Lesson Plan Cont.

Writing the Chorus
Introduce the formula for the chorus:
Line 1: Name of topic twice
Line 2: Describe the topic (A)
Line 3: Name of topic twice
Line 4: Line describing topic, rhymes with line 2 (A)
Lines 5-6: Rhyming couplet about why they like the topic
Line 7: Topic name 1, 2, 3, or 4 times
Have students follow the formula to write their chorus.

Sharing and Discussion
Students will share their verses and choruses with the class.
Facilitate a discussion on how the verse sets up the chorus and the effect of repetition in the chorus. Encourage positive feedback from peers.

Reflection
Conclude with a brief reflection on what students learned about song structure and repetition. Discuss how they can apply these concepts in future songwriting projects.

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Additional Tips and Tricks

1. As always, you can continue this lesson by setting the lyrics to music.

2. Students may think at first that repeating their topic is cheesy, and it can be, but it's helpful to remind them how often this type of repetition occurs in songs and to draw this attention to this concept as a tool available to them.

3. This lesson is great because you also learn more about your student's favorite activities, hobbies, and or foods.

Love Song About That Thing I Like

CHOOSE A TOPIC

What is something you really like? Favorite food or activity?

TOPIC:

WRITE THE VERSE, DESCRIBE THE TOPIC, BUT DON'T SAY WHAT IT IS:

WRITE THE CHORUS USING THIS FORMULA:

WRITE THE TOPIC NAME TWICE:

ONE LINE DESCRIBING THE TOPIC:

A

WRITE THE TOPIC NAME TWICE:

ONE LINE DESCRIBING THE TOPIC:

A

RHYMING COUPLET DESCRIBING WHY YOU LIKE THE TOPIC

B

B

**WRITE THE TOPIC NAME
(1, 2 OR 3 TIMES):**

Write a Commercial Jingle - Overview

Overview:
This lesson is designed to introduce students to the structure and elements of commercial jingles, providing them with a real-world application of songwriting that is short, fun, and deeply rooted in pop culture.

Lesson Highlights:

Real-World Application: Students will learn about commercial jingles, a practical and widely recognized form of songwriting used in advertising.

Creative Expression: By creating jingles for imaginary or AI-generated products, students can explore their creativity while learning about the key components of effective advertising.

Short and Fun: The short format of jingles allows students to quickly generate ideas and see results, helping them to loosen up and enjoy the process without getting too attached or worried about perfection.

Low Ego Involvement: Because jingles are meant to be catchy and fun rather than serious and personal, students are less likely to feel ego-involved in their work. This creates a more relaxed and open environment for creativity.

Engaging and Interactive: The lesson includes listening to examples, writing jingles, and an optional extension activity where students can record and film their jingles as advertisements.

By the end of this lesson, your students will have a deeper understanding of commercial jingles and the skills to create their own. This activity not only enhances their songwriting abilities but also provides insight into the world of advertising, encouraging them to think creatively and critically about how music can influence and persuade.
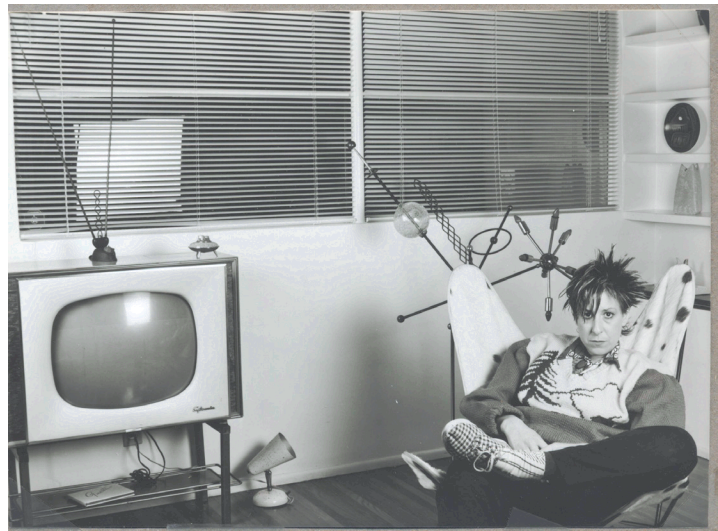
Write a Commercial Jingle - Lesson

Objective:
Students will learn about the structure and elements of commercial jingles, create their own jingle for an imaginary or AI-generated product, and explore the role of jingles in advertising. This lesson will introduce students to a real-world songwriting format that is short, fun, and rooted in pop culture.

Materials Needed:
1. Examples of commercial jingles (audio or video)
2. Handouts with jingle-writing formula
3. Pencils/pens
4. Background tracks or instruments (optional)
5. Recording devices and cameras (for extension activity)

Lesson Activities:

Introduction
Begin with a discussion on commercial jingles and their role in advertising. Highlight how jingles are designed to be catchy and memorable by using syncopation, repetition, and by being short.. Play several examples of well-known commercial jingles. Discuss what makes them effective and memorable.

Choosing a Product
Students will either make up an imaginary product or choose one generated by an AI tool Discuss the importance of understanding the product and target audience when creating a jingle.

Jingels were common in radio programs

Writing the Jingle
Distribute handouts with a formula for writing a jingle. Students will use the formula to write their own jingle for their chosen product. Encourage creativity and simplicity.

Sharing and Discussion
Students will share their jingles with the class. Facilitate a discussion on what makes each jingle effective and how well it represents the product.

Write a Commercial Jingle - Lesson cont.

Extension Activity
Students can record their jingle and film an ad for their product. Provide guidance on basic recording techniques and video production. Encourage students to incorporate visual elements that enhance their jingle and product appeal.

Reflection
Conclude with a brief reflection on what students learned about jingle writing and its application in the real world. Discuss how the skills learned can be applied to other areas of songwriting and advertising.

National Core Arts Standards Alignment:

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Additional Tips and Tricks

1. Don't forget to ask students what their favorite commercial jingle is!

2. It's always okay for students to creatively go "off formula."

3. If you are open to AI generation, you can take this project really far with marketing material and more.

4. There are fantastic commercial video compilations on YouTube. Encourage students to look at these ads as well as vintage radio ads.
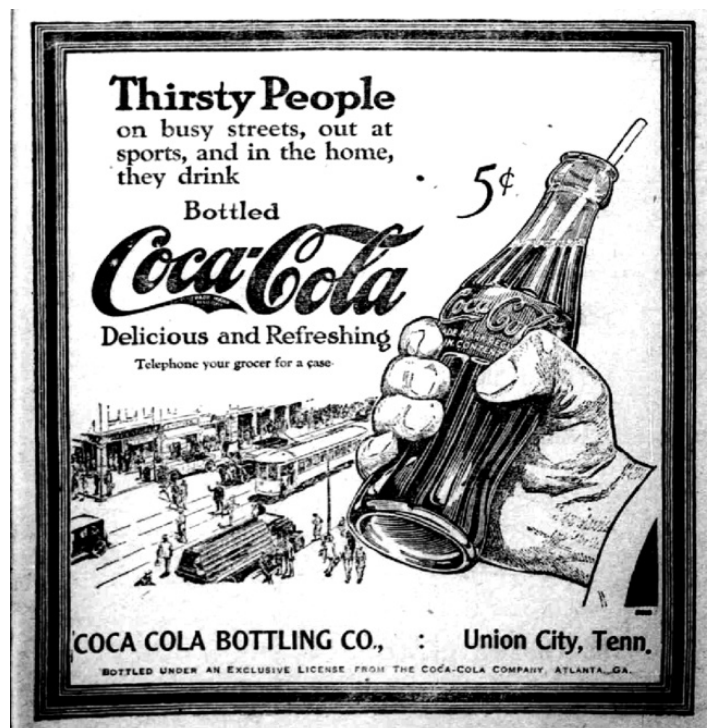
Vintage Coca-cola Ad, 1922

AI Generated Product Examples

Product Name: GlideStride Sneakers
Description: High-performance sneakers designed with a unique air-cushioning system that provides maximum comfort and support for runners and walkers.
Slogan: "Glide with every stride!"

Product Name: SunnySip Juice
Description: A refreshing, all-natural fruit juice blend made from sun-ripened fruits, offering a burst of flavor and vitamins in every sip.
Slogan: "Sip the sunshine!"

Product Name: EcoShield Phone Case
Description: An environmentally friendly phone case made from recycled materials, offering superior protection while reducing your carbon footprint.
Slogan: "Protect your phone, protect the planet!"

Product Name: DreamBeam Night Light
Description: A smart night light that projects soothing images and sounds to help children fall asleep peacefully and wake up refreshed.
Slogan: "Dream big, sleep tight!"

Product Name: SnackSmiles Granola Bars
Description: Delicious, wholesome granola bars packed with nuts, seeds, and dried fruits, perfect for a healthy snack on the go.
Slogan: "Snack happy, smile often!"

Product Name: AquaPulse Water Bottle
Description: A smart water bottle that tracks your hydration levels and reminds you to drink water throughout the day with gentle vibrations and LED lights.
Slogan: "Stay hydrated, stay energized!"

Product Name: BreezeEase Air Purifier
Description: A compact, high-efficiency air purifier that uses advanced filtration technology to remove allergens, pollutants, and odors from your home, ensuring fresh and clean air.
Slogan: "Breathe easy, live better!"

Write a Commercial Jingle

CHOOSE A PRODUCT

Make up a product or have AI generate a fake product for you.

PRODUCT:

WRITE TWO RHYMING LINES ABOUT THE PROBLEM THAT YOUR PRODUCT ADDRESSES

A

A

WRITE TWO RHYMING LINES ABOUT HOW YOUR PRODUCT SOLVES THAT PROBLEM

B

B

WRITE TWO RHYMING LINES EMPHASIZING THE NAME OF THE PRODUCT

C

C

WRITE OUT YOUR PRODUCT SLOGAN

Write a Traditional Blues - Overview

Overview:
This lesson is designed to introduce students to the rich history and cultural significance of the blues, teaching them how to write their own 12-bar blues lyrics inspired by the lyrical traditions of W.C. Handy. Students will set their lyrics to 12-bar blues background tracks, immersing themselves in this foundational genre of American music.

Lesson Highlights:

Cultural and Historical Significance: The blues is a cornerstone of American music, influencing many genres such as jazz, rock, and R&B. Understanding the blues provides students with a deeper appreciation of its impact on popular culture and American history. Highlighting figures like W.C. Handy connects students to the origins and development of the blues.

W. C. Handy 1949

Expressive Creativity: The 12-bar blues structure allows students to express personal emotions and experiences through music. By writing about relatable themes like hard times, lost love, or feeling lonely, students can explore their own creativity and emotional expression.

Structured Learning: The lesson introduces students to the AAB lyrical format of the 12-bar blues, guiding them through writing lyrics and fitting them to a musical structure. This structured approach makes it easy for students to understand and create their own blues songs.

Interactive and Engaging: Students will listen to examples of traditional 12-bar blues, write their own lyrics, and perform them with background tracks or live instruments. This hands-on approach keeps students engaged and actively participating throughout the lesson.

By the end of this lesson, your students will have a deeper understanding of the blues and its significance in American culture. They will have created their own 12-bar blues lyrics and experienced the power of music as a form of personal expression.

Write a Traditional Blues - Lesson

Objective:
Students will learn the structure and lyrical traditions of the 12-bar blues, using the style of W.C. Handy. They will write their own blues lyrics and set them to 12-bar blues background tracks.

Materials Needed:
1. Examples of 12-bar blues songs
2. Handouts with 12-bar blues structure and lyrical format
3. Pencils/pens
4. 12-bar blues background tracks
5. Instruments/DAW (optional)

Lesson Activities:

Introduction
Begin with a brief history of the 12-bar blues and its significance in American music, highlighting W.C. Handy as a key figure. Play examples of traditional 12-bar blues songs and discuss their common themes and lyrical structure.

Explaining the 12-Bar Blues Structure
Introduce the 12-bar blues chord progression and its typical lyrical format (AAB structure):
Line 1: Statement (A)
Line 2: Repeat of Line 1 (A)
Line 3: Response or conclusion (B)
Provide examples and write a sample 12-bar blues verse on the board.

Writing Blues Lyrics
Distribute handouts with the 12-bar blues structure and lyrical format. Students will brainstorm themes or topics for their blues song (e.g., a bad day, lost love, missing home). Guide students to write their own 12-bar blues lyrics using AAB format.

Setting Lyrics to Music
Play 12-bar blues background tracks and have students practice fitting their lyrics to the music Encourage students to experiment with singing their lyrics over the tracks, focusing on rhythm and expression. Optionally, students can use instruments to accompany their lyrics.

Write a Traditional Blues - Lesson Cont.

Sharing and Discussion
Students will share their blues lyrics with the class, performing them with the background tracks or live instruments. Facilitate a discussion on the themes and expressions in their lyrics, and how they reflect the tradition of the blues.
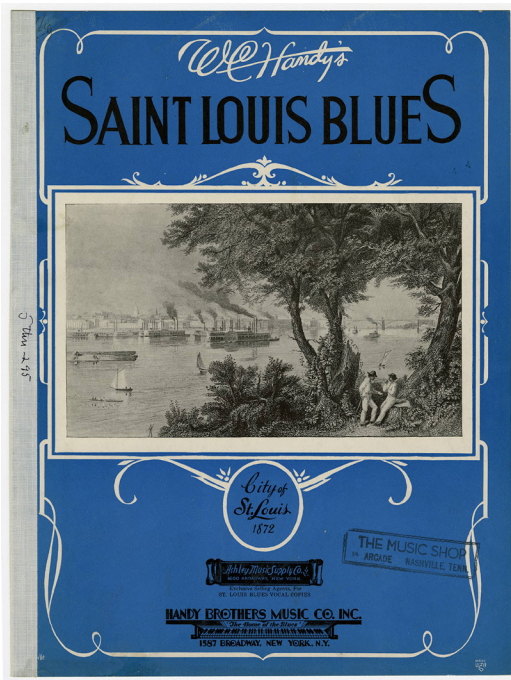
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Example Blues Lyrics

St Louis Blues - W. C. Handy, 1914

I hate to see, that evening sun go down
I hate to see, that evening sun go down
Cause my baby, he's done left this town

Feelin' tomorrow like I feel today
Feelin' tomorrow like I feel today
I'll pack my truck. Make my get away

1914 Sheet Music Cover

**See See Rider - Traditional
(Recorded in 1924 by Ma Rainey)**

I'm goin' away, baby, I won't be back till fall,
Goin' away, baby, won't be back till fall
If I find me a good man, won't be back at all

Ma Rainey and Band 1923

Write a Traditional Blues

CHOOSE A TOPIC

The blues is usually about a frustrating circumstance. Examples: A bad day, lost love, feeling lonely, hard times, missing home, unfair treatment, trouble at work/hard work, health troubles, friendship woes, dreams and dissapointments.

TOPIC

EACH BLUES CHORUS WILL ONLY HAVE TWO RHYMING LINES. THE FIRST LINE IS REPEATED TWICE AND THEN CONCLUDED WITH THE LAST LINE. WE WILL BE WRITING FOUR CHOURSES TODAY.

CHORUS 1: DESCRIBE THE FRUSTRATING CIRCUMSTANCE

(2X)A

A

CHORUS 2: DESRIBE HOW THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU ARE REACTING

(2X)B

B

CHORUS 3: HOW WILL YOU OVERCOME THIS PROBLEM?

(2X)C

C

CHORUS 4: HOW WILL IT FEEL TO OVERCOME THIS PPROBLEM?

(2X)D

D

Musical Mad-Libs - Overview

What's a Mad-lib?
Invented in 1953 by Leonard Stern and Roger Price, Mad libs are the fantastically fun "fill in the blank" writing game. Using parts of speech, you pick random words and then place these words into a pre-determined script.

What's a Musical Mad-lib?
We are applying this principal to songs, using scripts prepared by Chat GPT. Students are given a list of blanks labeled with parts of speech. They choose words and place these into the provided templates. This results in silly and often hilarious songs. The resulting songs are either read, set to music by the students, or set to music by AI.

What's the point of this?
In addition to being really fun, this activity opens up a dialogue with students about word choice and helps students better understand their parts of speech. All of this is great for a developing songwriter.

Format
After the lesson plan, you will find the lists of words for five songs. The scripts are found in a section at the back of this book. This is to hide the context of the words you are choosing. There is also a guide with *parts of speech* definitions available.

AI Tools
As the value of this activity is in picking out and experimenting with parts of speech, this is a great activity to plug into AI tools such as *Suno* or *Udio*. This will greatly enhance the reveal of the words in the script if put directly into one of these music generators. Regardless of how much these tools are present in you class, it's something that is important to discuss and examine with your students.

Musical Mad-libs - Lesson

Objective:
Students will experiment with parts of speech and word choice by creating Musical Mad Libs. They will then use an AI song generator to perform their creations, exploring the capabilities of AI in music generation.

Materials Needed:
1. Pre-generated Mad Libs scripts from Chat GPT
2. Handouts defining parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc.)
3. Pencils/pens
4. Access to an AI song generator

Lesson Activities:

Introduction
Begin with a brief discussion on parts of speech and their importance in language. Explain the concept of Mad Libs and how they will be used to create unique songs.

Defining Parts of Speech
Distribute the handouts defining parts of speech. Review the definitions and provide examples of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. Answer any questions students may have about parts of speech.

Creating Musical Mad Libs (15 minutes)
Distribute the pre-generated Mad Libs word lists to the students. Have students work individually or in pairs to fill in the blanks with their chosen parts of speech. Encourage creativity and humor in their word choices to make the final song entertaining.

Filling in the Mad-lib
After students complete their word lists, hand out the associated song scripts. Make sure students know not to change any of the words as the transfer the words from the lists into the song scripts.

Generating AI Songs
Once the Mad Libs are completed, input the scripts into the AI song generator. Play the generated songs for the class. Discuss the results, focusing on how the word choices affected the final song and the capabilities of the AI in interpreting and performing the lyrics.

Musical Mad-libs - Lesson Continued

Sharing and Discussion
Students will share their favorite Mad Libs and the resulting AI-generated songs with the class. Facilitate a discussion on the experience, examining the role of word choice in songwriting and the potential and limitations of AI in music creation.

National Core Arts Standards Alignment:
Creating (MU.1.5a): Students will generate musical ideas for various purposes and contexts.
Performing (MU.2.5a): Students will demonstrate the ability to read and perform music.
Responding (MU.1.5a): Students will perceive and analyze music.
Connecting (MU.0.5a): Students will synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.

Language Arts Standards Alignment:
Writing (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3): Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
Language (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.1): Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Additional Tips and Tricks:

1. This is a fantastic group activity. I would encourage breaking the class into 4 or 5 groups.

2. In my experience, students love AI song generators and then quickly become dissatisfied, desiring more control over the creative output. This is usually a boon to their desire to build more skills.

3. Make sure that students don't feel bad if they don't know their parts of speech. This will help them move towards mastering that content and the ELA teachers will thank you,

4. Encourage the students to be creative and silly with their word choices. That's the whole point of Mad-libs.

Musical Mad-lib Vocabulary List

Adjectives

Definition: Words that describe or modify nouns.
Examples: bright, light, fast, strong, happy, dark, lovely, cold, sweet, brave

Nouns

Definition: Words that name a person, place, thing, or idea.
Examples: star, friend, trend, blast, park, heart, sky, hand, night, love

Verbs

Definition: Words that express an action or a state of being.
Examples: sing, dance, bark, fly, run, had, fight, stand, rise, laugh

Plural Nouns

Definition: Words that name more than one person, place, thing, or idea.
Examples: rings, knights, lights, streets, beats, hearts, stars, friends, hands, places

Emotions

Definition: Words that describe feelings or states of mind.
Examples: glad, happy, sad, excited, nervous, calm, scared, angry, proud, joyful

Places

Definition: Words that describe locations.
Examples: park, school, city, town, house, beach, mountains, street, country, neighborhood

POP SONG MAD LIB #1

1. (adjective)

2. (emotion)

3. (adjective) - (Rhymes with "light")

4. (body part)

5. (verb) - (Rhymes with "day")

6. (noun)

7. (noun) - (Rhymes with the 6)

8. (verb)

9. (noun) - (Rhymes with "everything")

10. (emotion)

11. (verb) - (Rhymes with "forevermore")

12. (adjective)

13. (noun)

14. (adjective) - (Rhymes with "hearts")

15. (noun) - (Rhymes with 13)

16. (verb)

17. (adjective)

18. (noun)

19. (noun) - (Rhymes with 18)

20. (noun)

21. (verb) - (Rhymes with "forevermore")

COUNTRY SONG MAD LIB #1

1. (adjective)

2. (noun)

3. (body part)

4. (body part)

5. (time of day)

6. (noun)

7. (noun) - (Rhymes with #6)

8. (verb)

9. (noun) - (Rhymes with *everything*)

10. (emotion)

11. verb) - (Rhymes with *forevermore*)

12. (noun)

13. (adjective)

14. (noun)

15. (adjective) - (rhymes with *band*)

16. (noun) (rhymes with #14)

17. (verb)

18. (adjective)

19. (noun)

20. (noun) (rhymes with #19)

HEAVY METAL MAD LIB #1

1. (adjective)

2. (noun)

3. (verb)

4. (place)

5. (verb)

6. (emotion)

7. (adjective)

8. (verb)

9. (noun)

10. (noun)

11. (verb)

12. (noun) (Rhymes with *flame*)

13. (emotion)

14. (verb)

15. (adjective)

16. (noun)

17. (verb)

18. (adjective)

19. (verb)

20. (verb)

21. (noun)

22. (adjective)

JAZZ STANDARD MAD LIB #1

1. (adjective)

2. (noun)

3. (verb)

4. (emotion)

5. (noun)

6. (adjective)

7. (place)

8. (verb)

9. (adjective)

10. (verb)

11. (emotion)

12. (noun)

13. (adjective)

14. (noun)

15. (verb)

16. (adjective)

17. (adjective)

18. (noun)

19. (verb)

20. (emotion)

21. (noun)

22. (adjective)

RAP MAD LIB #1

1. (adjective)

2. (noun) (Rhymes with #1)

3. (verb)

4. (plural noun) (Rhymes with #3)

5. (noun)

6. (verb) (Rhymes with #5)

7. (place)

8. (verb) (Rhymes with #7)

9. (noun)

10. (noun) (Rhymes with #9)

11. (verb)

12. (verb) (Rhymes with #11)

13. (emotion)

14. (verb) (Rhymes with #13)

15. (adjective)

16. (noun) (Rhymes with #15)

17. (verb)

18. (adjective) (Rhymes with #17)

19. (verb)

20. (Plural noun) (Rhymes with *night*)

21. (adjective) (Rhymes with #19)

The Great Parody Showcase - Overview

"Weird Al" Yankovic
By Kristine Slipson - Own work, CC BY 3.0

Overview
This lesson is designed to introduce students to the art of parody songwriting, using humor and creativity to write new lyrics to familiar melodies. By the end of the lesson, students will have created their own parody song and performed or recorded it using a YouTube karaoke background track.

Lesson Highlights:

Analytical Skills: Students will analyze their chosen song's structure, including syllable count, rhyme scheme, and form, enhancing their understanding of song composition.

Creative Expression: Writing parody lyrics encourages students to think creatively and humorously, emulating the style of "Weird Al" Yankovic.

Engaging and Interactive: The lesson includes song analysis, lyric writing, and performance, making it an interactive and enjoyable learning experience.

Low-Stakes Fun: Parody writing allows students to experiment with humor and creativity without the pressure of creating original melodies.

By the end of this lesson, your students will have a deeper understanding of song structure and parody writing, along with a memorable and entertaining song performance.

The Great Parody Showcase - Lesson

Objective:
Students will learn to write and perform a parody song in the style of "Weird Al" Yankovic. They will analyze their chosen song for its syllable count, rhyme scheme, and form, then create new lyrics to fit the original melody. The final product will be performed or recorded using a YouTube karaoke background track.

Materials Needed:
1. Access to YouTube for karaoke tracks
2. Lyrics and audio of chosen songs
3. Handouts for syllable and rhyme analysis
4. Pencils/pens
5. Recording devices (optional)

Lesson Activities:

Introduction
Introduce the concept of parody songs, highlighting "Weird Al" Yankovic as a prominent example. Play a few examples of "Weird Al" parodies and discuss what makes them effective and entertaining.

Choosing and Analyzing a Song
Students will choose a song they want to parody. Distribute handouts for analyzing the song's lyrics, focusing on the number of syllables per line, rhyme scheme, and overall form. Guide students through the process of breaking down the original lyrics, ensuring they understand how to match their new lyrics to the song's structure.

Writing Parody Lyrics
Students will brainstorm ideas for their parody, choosing a new theme or story that fits the melody of their chosen song. Have students write new lyrics, ensuring they match the syllable count and rhyme scheme of the original. Encourage creativity and humor in their lyric writing.

The Great Parody Showcase - Lesson Continued

Rehearsal and Performance
Students will practice singing their parody lyrics to the melody of the original song using YouTube karaoke background tracks. Facilitate a performance session where students can sing their parodies for the class. Optionally, students can record their performances using available recording devices.

Reflection:
Discuss the challenges and fun aspects of writing a parody song. Encourage students to reflect on how analyzing song structure and syllable count can enhance their songwriting skills.

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Responding (MU.1.5a): Students will perceive and analyze music.
Connecting (MU.0.5a): Students will synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.

Additional Tips and Tricks:

1. This is our first dive into song analysis. Even though this lesson is meant to be fun and light, there is so much value to getting students into analysis. We just call it listening and noticing what is happening.

2. Parody writing exposes students to a large range of comedic songwriting. This genere is not always school appropriate, but here are a few tracks that are school appropriate that might be worth exploring: *Grocery Store* - Kate Micucci, *The Elements* - Tom Lehrer, *Craft Talk* - Leslie Hall

[Singer Songwriter Kate Micucci by Genevieve - CC2.0](#)

How to Write a "Weird Al" Style Parody

Choose a Song:
1. Pick a song you like and find a karaoke track for that song on YouTube.
2. Look up or listen and write down the lyrics of the song on a blank piece of paper.

Listening to Your Chosen Song:
1. *Form:* Note the structure of the song (verse, chorus, bridge, etc.).

2. *Number of lines:* in each section (verse, chorus, etc)

3. *Number of Syllables Per Line:* Break down each line of the original song and count the number of syllables.

4. *Rhyme Scheme:* Identify the rhyme scheme used in the song (e.g., ABAB, AABB).

Writing You Parody:
1. *Choose a Theme:* Think of a humorous or interesting new theme for your parody. Start by finding a phrase that fits the chorus and/or the hook of the song.

2. *Match Syllables and Rhymes:* Write your new lyrics, ensuring they match the syllable count and rhyme scheme of the original.

3. *Keep It Fun:* Use humor and creativity to make your parody entertaining.

Using Karaoke Tracks:
1. Try singing your lyrics over the karaoke track. It may be helpful to break it down or sing even practice singing the original back to back with your parody.

2. If you wanted to take this further, you can use a DAW or live instruments to create your own background track.

3. Consider recording you parody or performing it for friends and family!

Writing Cartoon Theme Songs - Overview

Overview:
This lesson is designed to teach students the elements of crafting a catchy and engaging theme song for an imaginary cartoon. By the end of the lesson, students will have written and performed their own theme songs, highlighting their creativity and understanding of song structure.

Lesson Highlights:

Creative Expression: Students will brainstorm and create their own cartoon concepts, allowing them to explore their imagination and storytelling skills.

Song Structure: The lesson emphasizes the importance of a clear and engaging song structure, helping students understand how to build a song that captures attention.

Memorable Hooks and Syncopation: Students will learn how to create catchy hooks and use syncopation to add energy and interest to their theme songs.

Roll Call Section: Introducing characters in a rhythmic "roll call" section adds a dynamic and engaging element to their songs.

Engaging and Interactive: The lesson includes brainstorming, writing, and performing, making it an interactive and enjoyable learning experience.

By the end of this lesson, your students will have a deeper understanding of how to write a theme song that captures the essence of a cartoon. This activity not only enhances their songwriting abilities but also encourages them to think creatively and critically about music and storytelling.

Get ready to guide your students through a fun and imaginative exploration of songwriting with cartoon theme songs!

Writing Cartoon Theme Songs - Lesson

Objective:
Students will learn the elements of writing a catchy and engaging theme song for a cartoon. They will create lyrics and a melody that capture the essence of an imaginary cartoon, focusing on memorable hooks, playful language, syncopation, and a "roll call" section.

Materials Needed:
1. Examples of cartoon theme songs (audio or video)
2. Handouts with a structure guide for theme songs
3. Pencils/pens
4. Background tracks or instruments (optional)
5. Recording devices (optional)
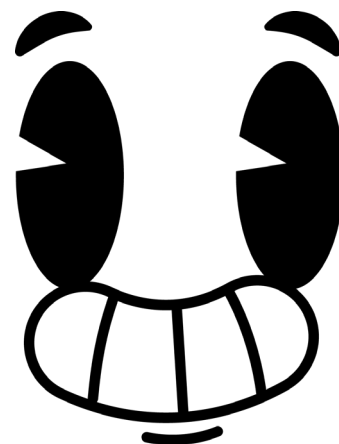
Lesson Activities:

Introduction:
Begin with a discussion on what makes a cartoon theme song memorable. Highlight elements such as catchy melodies, repetitive hooks, playful language, syncopation, and the "roll call" section where characters are introduced. Play a few examples of popular cartoon theme songs and discuss their key features, focusing on these elements.

Brainstorming Cartoon Concepts:
Have students brainstorm ideas for an imaginary cartoon, including characters, setting, and the general storyline. Encourage students to think about what makes their cartoon unique and how they can capture that in a theme song. Alternatively, you can provide students with AI generated cartoon ideas.

Writing the Theme Song:
Distribute handouts with a structure guide for writing a theme song. Discuss the concept of syncopation and how it can add energy and interest to their theme song. Students will write lyrics for their theme song, focusing on making it fun and memorable. Encourage them to incorporate syncopation and a "roll call" section.

Writing Cartoon Theme Songs - Lesson Continued

Rehearsal and Performance:
Students will practice singing their theme song lyrics, optionally using background tracks or instruments. Facilitate a performance session where students can sing their theme songs for the class. Optionally, students can record their performances using available recording devices.

Sharing and Discussion:
Students will share their cartoon concepts and theme songs with the class. Facilitate a discussion on what makes each theme song effective and how it captures the essence of the imaginary cartoon. Highlight the use of syncopation and the "roll call" section.

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Responding (MU.1.5a): Students will perceive and analyze music.
Connecting (MU.0.5a): Students will synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.

Additional Tips and Tricks:
1. Students will have favorite cartoon theme songs. Encourage them to share their favorites and reverse engineersong formulas for those songs.

2. While many students will find joy in creating their own cartoon, AI generated cartoons are a great tool if students get stuck. Anything to keep them songwriting!

Writing Cartoon Theme Songs - Lesson Continued

Rehearsal and Performance:
Students will practice singing their theme song lyrics, optionally using background tracks or instruments. Facilitate a performance session where students can sing their theme songs for the class. Optionally, students can record their performances using available recording devices.

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Write a Cartoon Theme song

VERSE: WRITE ABOUT THE SETTING / CHARACTERS / PLOT OF SHOW

	A
	B
	A
	B
	D
	D

CHORUS: START WITH THE NAME OF THE SHOW

	NAME OF SHOW **A**
	DESCRIBE SHOW **B**
	NAME OF SHOW **A**
	DESCRIBE SHOW **B**

ROLL CALL:

NAMES OF CHARACTERS
NAMES OF CHARACTERS / OPTIONAL RHYME

REPEAT CHORUS

AI Generated Cartoon Examples (Chat GPT)

1. Super Dino Squad
Premise: In a prehistoric world, a group of intelligent dinosaurs with superpowers protects their land from evil creatures and natural disasters.
Characters: Rex the T-Rex, Tricia the Triceratops, Ptera the Pterodactyl, Spike the Stegosaurus, and Bruno the Brachiosaurus.

2. Cosmic Critters
Premise: Tiny alien creatures from different planets team up to explore the galaxy, solve cosmic mysteries, and make new friends.
Characters: Zorb the Zogian, Luma the Lunarian, Fizz the Fizbit, Glorp the Glomian, and Nix the Neptunian.

3. Mystery Manor
Premise: A group of kids discovers a magical mansion filled with enchanted objects and mystical creatures. They solve puzzles to uncover the secrets of the manor.
Characters: Max, Lily, Oliver, Emma, and Professor Puzzles.

4. Robo Rangers
Premise: In a futuristic city, a team of young inventors creates robot companions to help them fight crime and save the day.
Characters: Leo, Mia, Jake, Ava, and their robot friends: Bolt, Spark, Gizmo, and Cypher.

5. Fantasy Forest
Premise: In a magical forest, mythical creatures band together to protect their home from dark forces and discover hidden treasures.
Characters: Finn the Fairy, Gwen the Griffin, Ollie the Owl, Luna the Unicorn, and Blaze the Dragon.

6. Pirate Pals
Premise: A group of young pirates sails the seas in search of adventure, treasure, and fun, while learning valuable lessons about friendship and teamwork.
Characters: Captain Ruby, Jack, Pearl, Finn, and their parrot Polly.

Everything is a Remix - Overview

Overview:
This lesson is designed to teach students the concept that all music builds upon existing ideas and influences. By analyzing their favorite songs and borrowing key elements, students will create their own unique compositions, exploring and experimenting with musical ideas.

Lesson Highlights:

Creative Expression: Students will analyze their favorite songs to identify key elements and use these elements to create their own compositions.

Song Analysis: The lesson emphasizes the importance of understanding and analyzing music to learn from existing works.

Exploration and Experimentation: Encourages students to experiment with musical ideas and modify borrowed elements to make them their own.

Engaging and Interactive: The lesson includes listening, analyzing, composing, and performing, making it an interactive and enjoyable learning experience.

By the end of this lesson, your students will have a deeper understanding of how all music is influenced by previous works and the importance of analysis in the creative process. This activity not only enhances their songwriting abilities but also encourages them to think critically about music and its influences

Everything is a Remix - Lesson

Objective:
Students will analyze their favorite songs to identify key elements and use these elements to create their own unique compositions. This lesson emphasizes the concept that all music is influenced by previous works and encourages students to explore and experiment with musical ideas.

Materials Needed:
1. Access to students' favorite songs (audio or video)
2. Handouts for song analysis
3. Pencils/pens
4. Instruments or DAW (optional)
5. Recording devices (optional)

Lesson Activities:

Introduction: Discuss the concept that "everything is a remix," explaining how all music builds upon existing ideas and influences. Play a few examples of well-known songs that have borrowed elements from other songs and discuss these influences.

Song Analysis:
Distribute the handouts for song analysis, which list key elements for which to listen. Have students listen to their favorite songs and identify one or more elements they would like to use in their own composition.

Creating Unique Compositions:
Students will use the chosen elements from their analyzed songs to create their own unique compositions. Encourage students to experiment and modify these elements to make them their own. Provide instruments or DAW access for students to compose and experiment with their musical ideas.

Everything is a Remix - Lesson

Rehearsal and Performance
Students will practice their compositions, optionally using instruments or a DAW. Facilitate a performance session where students can share their compositions with the class. Optionally, students can record their performances using available recording devices.

Sharing and Discussion:
Students will share their compositions and the elements they borrowed from their favorite songs. Facilitate a discussion on the creative process and how borrowing elements from existing music helped shape their unique compositions.

National Core Arts Standards Alignment:
Creating (MU.1.5a): Students will generate musical ideas for various purposes and contexts.
Performing (MU.2.5a): Students will demonstrate the ability to read and perform music.
Responding (MU.1.5a): Students will perceive and analyze music.
Connecting (MU.0.5a): Students will synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.

Additional Tips and Tricks:
1. Students may feel an urge to be "completely original." Part of this lesson is to help them understand that, not only is that impossible, it's also undesirable. Learning from the artists that came before us is a part of the journey!

2. The listening is as important as the writing in this lesson. Since students are listening to their favorite songs, this is a great opportunity to learn more about them.

3. Encourage students to look up the lyrics and chord progressions online to help them with their listening!

Song Listening Guide

WHAT INSTRUMENTS DO YOU HEAR?

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE EMOTIONAL FEEL?

ARE THERE VOCALS? HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THEM?

LOOK UP OR WRITE DOWN THE LYRICS ON A SEPERATE PAPER

WHAT IS THIS SONG ABOUT (THEMES/NARRATIVE)

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS SONG?

WHAT IS THE SONG FORM?

MORE THINGS TO NOTE ON A SEPERATE PAPER: TIME SIGNATURE, INTERESTING CHORD CHANGES, RHYME SCHEME, COMPING PATTERNS, ANYTHING ELSE YOU FIND INTERESTING

Inspiration from Everywhere - Overview

Overview:
his lesson is designed to teach students how to find inspiration for songwriting in unexpected places, such as real-world texts, literature, and historical events. By the end of the lesson, students will have created their own songs based on a chosen source of inspiration.

Lesson Highlights:

Creative Exploration: Students will explore a variety of sources for songwriting inspiration, broadening their creative horizons.

Song Analysis: The lesson includes analyzing examples of songs inspired by real-world texts, literature, and historical events, helping students understand the connection between inspiration and creativity.

Personal Expression: Students will create their own songs based on chosen inspirations, allowing for personal expression and experimentation.

Engaging and Interactive: The lesson includes listening, analyzing, researching, writing, and performing, making it an interactive and enjoyable learning experience.

By the end of this lesson, your students will have a deeper understanding of how to find and use inspiration from various sources to create meaningful and original songs. This activity not only enhances their songwriting abilities but also encourages them to think creatively and critically about the world around them.

Inspiration from Everywhere - Lesson

Objective:
Students will explore how to find inspiration for songwriting in unexpected places, including real-world texts, literature, and historical events. They will analyze examples of songs inspired by these sources and create their own songs based on a chosen inspiration.

Materials Needed:
1. Examples of songs inspired by real-world texts, literature, and historical events (audio or video)
2. Pencils/pens
3. Instruments or DAW (optional)
4. Recording devices (optional)

Lesson Activities:

Introduction:
Discuss the concept of finding inspiration in unexpected places for songwriting.

Provide examples of songs inspired by various sources:
Literature: "Wuthering Heights" by Kate Bush, "To Be Young, Gifted and Black" by Nina Simone
Real-World Texts: "Objects in the Rearview Mirror" by Meatloaf, "Detour Ahead" by Herb Ellis
Historical Events and Speeches: "One Last Time" from Hamilton, Lin Manuel Miranda

Play excerpts from these songs and discuss the source of their inspiration.

Choosing Inspiration:
Have students choose their own source of inspiration: a historical event, a piece of literature, or a real-world text. Provide time for students to research and gather information on their chosen inspiration.

Inspiration from Everywhere - Lesson Continued

Writing the Song
Students will write lyrics and create a melody based on their chosen inspiration. Encourage them to incorporate specific details and emotions from their source material into their songs. Provide instruments or DAW access for students to compose and experiment with their musical ideas if possible.

Rehearsal and Performance
Students will practice their compositions, optionally using instruments or a DAW. Facilitate a performance session where students can share their songs with the class. Optionally, students can record their performances using available recording devices.

National Core Arts Standards Alignment:
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Performing (MU.2.5a): Students will demonstrate the ability to read and perform music.
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Additional Tips and Tricks:
1. This pulls together everything the student's have learned so far. They will be picking rhyme schemes, song form, chord progressions and everything. That makes this one of the most challenging projects so far!

2. If students get stuck, encourage them to look into their interests to find inspiration. This is likely to increase comfort!

Change the World - Protest Songs

Overview:
This lesson is designed to teach students about the power of protest songs in addressing societal issues and advocating for change. By the end of the lesson, students will have created their own protest songs, highlighting their creativity and understanding of social responsibility.

Lesson Highlights:

Social Awareness: Students will explore the role of music in social and political movements, understanding the power of protest songs in advocating for change.

Song Analysis: The lesson includes analyzing examples of protest songs, helping students understand the connection between music and social issues.

Personal Expression: Students will choose an issue they care about and create their own protest songs, allowing for personal expression and active participation in society.

Cross-Curricular Learning: This project combines music and social studies, encouraging students to think critically about history and society.

By the end of this lesson, your students will have a deeper understanding of the power of music to inspire change and the importance of active citizenship. This activity not only enhances their songwriting abilities but also encourages them to think critically about the world around them.

Change the World - Protest Songs Lesson

Objective:
Students will learn about the power of protest songs in addressing societal issues and advocating for change. They will analyze examples of protest songs, choose an issue they care about, and write their own protest song. This project is cross-curricular, combining music and social studies, and encourages active participation in society.

Materials Needed:
1. Examples of protest songs (audio or video)
2. Pencils/pens
3. Instruments or DAW (optional)
4. Recording devices (optional)

Lesson Activities:

Introduction:
Discuss the role of protest songs in society and their impact on social and political movements. Introduce some examples of protest songs to be analyzed:

"We Shall Overcome" - Various Artists
"Strange Fruit" - Billie Holiday
"Respect" - Aretha Franklin
"What's Going On" - Marvin Gaye
"Born This Way" - Lady Gaga
"Sunday Bloody Sunday" - U2

Play excerpts from these songs and discuss the issues they address.

Choosing an Issue:
Have students choose an issue they care about. This could be a social, political, environmental, or personal issue. Provide time for students to research their chosen issue if needed.

Protest Songs Lesson Continued

Writing the Protest Song:
Students will write lyrics for their protest song, addressing the chosen issue. Encourage them to use strong, emotive language and to think about how their song can inspire change. Provide instruments or DAW access for students to compose and experiment with their musical ideas if possible.

Rehearsal and Performance:
Students will practice their compositions, optionally using instruments or a DAW. Facilitate a performance session where students can share their songs with the class. Optionally, students can record their performances using available recording devices.

Individual Reflection:
Ask students to take a few moments to reflect on the process of writing their protest song.

Prompt them to think about the following questions:
1. What issue did you choose and why is it important to you?
2. How did you feel while writing and performing your song?
3. What challenges did you face during the songwriting process?
4. How do you think your song could impact others?

Written Reflection:
Provide students with a piece of paper or journal to write down their thoughts and answers to the reflection questions. Encourage them to be honest and thorough in their reflections.

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Connecting (MU.0.5a): Students will synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.

Musical Wonders

—— H A N D O U T S ——

"If you have a weakness, turn it into a hook" - Allee Willis

Common Rhyme Schemes

There are so many ways to create rhymes in songs. Here are some of the most common:

1. **A B C B**
2. **A A B B**
3. **A B A B**
4. **A A A A**

5. **A B B A**
6. **A A A B**
7. **A B A B**
8. **A B A A**

And that's just to get you started! Remember, there are no rules, only tools!

Looking for more fun? Here are some five line rhyme schemes

9. **A A B B A**
10. **A B A A B**

11. **A B A B A**
12. **A A A B B**

Experiment with combining these in all different way to create all sorts of song formulas!

Check out this article from Jordan Reynolds in the ASCAP Website for more rhyme schemes and examples:

Song Form Definitions

SONGS HAVE MANY DIFFERENT FORMATS AND MAY OR MAY NOT CONTAIN EACH OF THESE ELEMENTS

VERSE

The verse is the part of the song where the story unfolds, containing the main lyrical content and providing details about the song's theme. Verses typically have the same melody but different lyrics for each verse, and they lead into the chorus.

CHORUS

The chorus is the main part of the song that contains the hook and is repeated several times. It is usually the most memorable part, with a higher energy level and a more straightforward, catchy melody compared to the verse.

BRIDGE

The bridge provides a contrast to the verse and chorus, offering a new perspective or a twist in the song. It usually appears once, typically after the second chorus, and introduces a different melody, rhythm, or lyrical idea.

PRE-CHORUS

A transitional section that leads from the verse to the chorus, often building anticipation and tension to make the chorus more impactful.

POST-CHORUS

A section that comes immediately after the chorus, serving to extend or emphasize the chorus. It often includes a repeat of the hook or new material that maintains the energy of the chorus.

INTRO

The introduction sets the tone and mood of the song, usually featuring an instrumental section or a brief preview of the main melody. It can be short or long, simple or complex, and is designed to grab the listener's attention.

OUTRO

The outro is the concluding section of the song, wrapping it up with a repetition of the chorus, a fade-out, or a completely new section.

Song Form Definitions Continued

SONGS HAVE MANY DIFFERENT FORMATS AND MAY OR MAY NOT CONTAIN EACH OF THESE ELEMENTS

HOOK

The hook is the catchy part of the song designed to stick in the listener's mind. It can be instrumental or lyrical and is often found in the chorus but can appear in other sections as well.

REFRAIN

A refrain is a line or lines that are repeated in the song, usually at the end of each verse. It is similar to a chorus but shorter and less structurally distinct.

INSTRUMENTAL BREAK / SOLOS

A section where instruments play without vocals, often showcasing the talents of the musicians. It serves as a break from the vocals and adds variety to the song.

CODA

An extended ending section that provides a final resolution to the song. The coda can be instrumental or include vocals and is often used in classical or more complex musical compositions

RIFF

A riff is a repeated sequence of notes or chords that is typically played on guitar or keyboard. It serves as a foundational element in rock, blues, and jazz, and can be a key part of the song's identity.

FILL

A fill is a short, often improvised, burst of notes that serves to bridge sections of a song or add interest. Drummers commonly use fills, but they can be played on any instrument.

DROP

Common in electronic music, a drop is a point where the song's rhythm or bass line dramatically changes, creating a high-energy moment. It often follows a build-up or tension.

BREAKDOWN / BUILDUP

A breakdown is a section where the music simplifies, often reducing to minimal elements like drums or bass. It creates a contrast and can build tension before a high point. A build-up is a section that gradually increases in intensity, leading to a climax such as a drop or chorus. It is often used to create anticipation and excitement.

Common Song Forms

Songs can be put together in many ways. Here are a few common ways

1. SIMPLE VERSE, CHORUS FROM

> **VERSE, CHORUS, VERSE, CHORUS, CHORUS**

2. VERSE, CHORUS, FORM

> **VERSE, CHORUS, VERSE, CHORUS, BRIDGE, CHORUS**

3. VERSE, PRE-CHORUS, CHORUS FORM

> **VERSE, PRE-CHORUS, CHORUS, VERSE,
> PRE-CHORUS, CHORUS, BRIDGE, CHORUS**

4. BINARY FORM

> **VERSE, CHORUS, VERSE, CHORUS**

5. AABA FORM

> **VERSE, VERSE, BRIDGE, VERSE**

EACH KEY HAS A MAJOR SCALE AND ASSOCIATED CHORDS
USE THIS TO HELP WITH HARMONY

The first column is the key in which you are composing. Within a row, any chord can go in any order and still sound good!

I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi
C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am
Db	Ebm	Fm	Gb	Ab	Bbm
D	Em	F#m	G	A	Bm
Eb	Fm	Gm	Ab	Bb	Cm
E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m
F	Gm	Am	Bb	C	Dm
F#	G#m	A#m	B	C#	D#m
G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em
Ab	Bbm	Cm	Db	Eb	Fm
A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m
Bb	Cm	Dm	Eb	F	Gm
B	C#m	D#m	E	F#	G#m
1	2	3	4	5	6

Common Chord Progressions

There are so many ways to create harmony in songs. Here are some of the most common Chord Progressions:

1. I-V-vi-IV

2. I-IV-V-IV

3. I-vi-IV-V

4. ii-IV-I-V

5. vi-IV-I-V

6. IV-iii-ii-I

7. ii-V-I-vi

8. I-vi-ii-V

And that's just to get you started! Remember, there are no rules, only tools!

Looking for more fun? Here are four progressions with altered chords (outside of key).

9. I-III-IV-iv

10. I-IV-vi-bVI

11. I-iv-IV-V

12. I-II-IV-V

Experiment with combining these in all different way to create all sorts of song formulas!

The Notes in Major Chords

C: C E G

D: D F# A

E: E G# B

F: F A C

G: G B D

A: A C# E

B: B D# F#

Db: Db F Ab

Eb: Eb G Bb

Gb: Gb Bb Db

Ab: Ab C Eb

Bb: Bb D F

F#: F# A# C#

C#: C# F G#

D#: D# G A#

G#: G# C D#

A#: A# D F

The Notes in Minor Chords

Cm: C Eb G

Dm: D F A

Em: E G B

Fm: F Ab C

Gm: G Bb D

Am: A C E

Bm: B D F#

Dbm: Db E Ab

Ebm: Eb Gb Bb

Gbm: Gb A Db

Abm: Ab B Eb

Bbm: Bb Db F

F#m: F# A C#

C#m: C# E G#

D#m: D# F# A#

G#m: G# B D#

A#m: A# C# F

Major and Minor Keyboard Diagrams
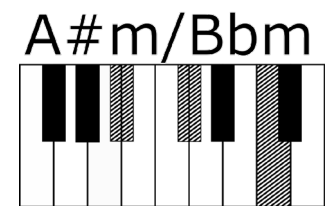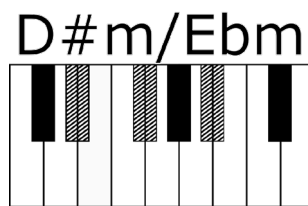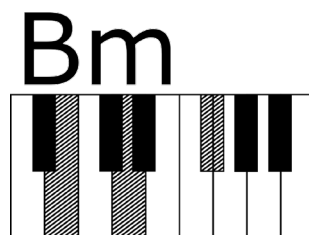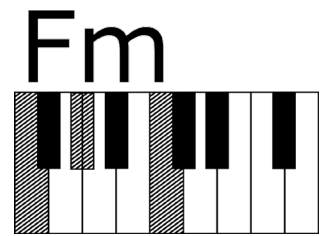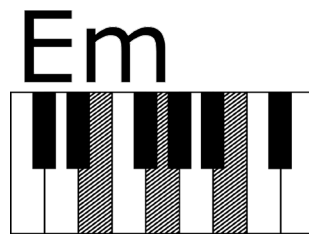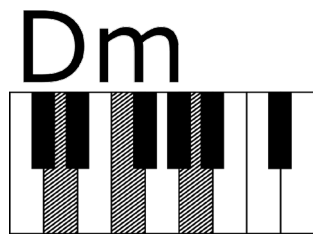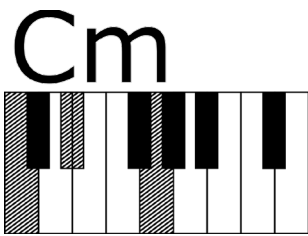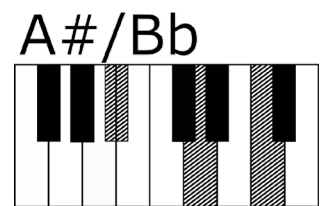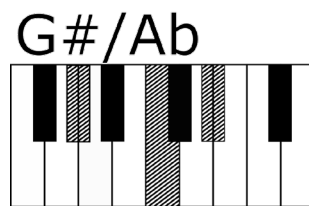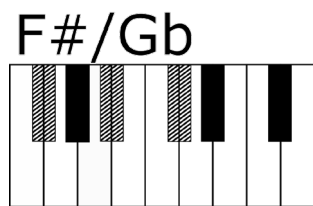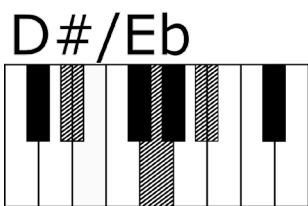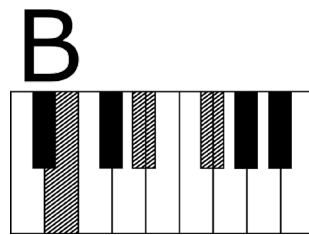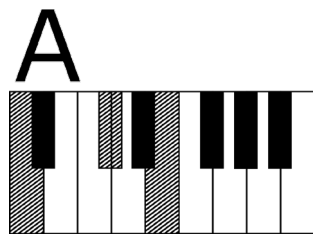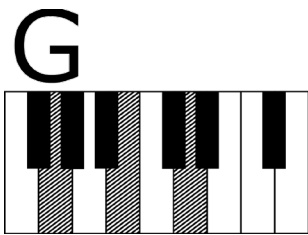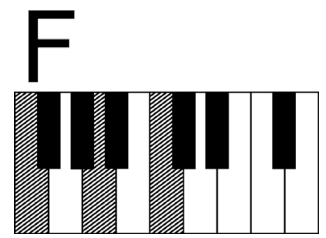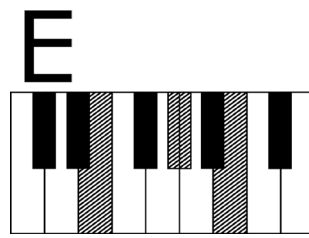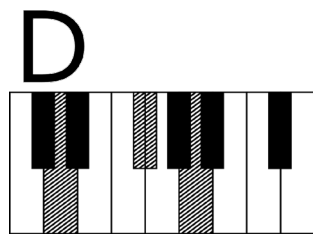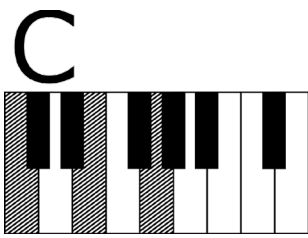
Writing Lyrics

SPEAKING SONGS INTO EXISTENCE

When we speak we are writing songs. Our words have rhythm and pitch. In this curriculum we exercise this human superpower and turn those words and sentences into songs. Don't be afraid to write down the words that occur to you. They are good enough.

ASPECTS OF ALL SONGS

Every song we write has a number of lines, each with a number of syllables. Sometimes words rhyme, but they don't have to rhyme. That doesn't mean rhymes are not valuable and important, just that they are not necessary.

In the back of this book there is a list of song forms and rhyme schemes. These can be combined in any way. Certain genres have a standard form, but even those forms are flexible.

LISTENING

The single most powerful thing that you can do is listen to songs and think about the lyrics. What makes them work? How many lines and in each section? How many syllables in each line? Where are the rhymes? Getting in this habit and helping your students to do the same is the most powerful songwriting lesson you can learn and teach.

LYRICS OR MUSIC FIRST?

Songwriters write in all sorts of ways. There isn't a wrong way to write songs. Most of the time this curicullum will take a lyrics first approach. For many students, lyric writing is less intimidating and the tools for music writing vary widely from class to class, The lyrics also tend to imply a rhythm and a melody. Ultimately, a strong connection between both the lyrics and melody is necessary to be a consistent songwriter.

It is also valuable to vary the approach from time to time. This allows you to think about songwriting from new persepctives. Try starting with chords first, a drum track, or huming/picking out a melody on an instrument from time to time just to mix it up!

Setting Lyrics to Music

UNLEASHING YOUR VOICE

Singing is one of the most powerful tools we have for musical expression. Almost all songwriters sing to experiment with melody and lyrics. Singing karaoke is a great way to get started. It's also incredibly valuable to practice playing notes on a keyboard and matching pitch. Sing-along with you favorite songs in the car! Comfort with one's own voice is a gift worth developing and an important skill for songwriters.

SINGING IN FRONT OF THE STUDENTS

Many music teahers are not comfortable singing. I think this may have to do with the time we spent mortifyingly standing in front of our freshman theory classes sight-singing in college, but that might just be my personal trauma.

Now is the time to bust the bubble. If you are not comfortable singing, let the students know that you are learning with them and proceed fearlessly. This will be necessary to invite the students to face their fears the same way!

SINGING YOUR LYRICS

1. Start by simply saying the words and listening to the rhythm and emphasis. Speak the words naturally

2. Think about which words are stressed and emphasized. The will want to be targeted towards the strong beats (beats 1 & 3). Try saying the words with a metronome or drum track,

3. Our voice naturally rises and falls as we speak. Use this natural movement to start singing the words you are saying.

4. Experiment. Make the words go up and down in pitch. Try steps and leaps.

5. Try to find the notes you are singing on a keyboard.

6. When you have a meoldy you like, record it.

Setting Lyrics to Music Continued

SINGING TO A CHORD PROGRESSION

Singing lyrics to a chord progression is a core songwriting skill to develop. Here are a few tricks,

1. Listen to the chord progression. Hum along when it starts to feel comfrotable

2. Melodies usually start on a chord tone. Pick and start on a note in the first chord. Feel free to cue it first on an instrument. Finding a starting note is sometimes enough to get started.

3. Melodies can stay on a pitch, go up, or go down. The can move in steps, or in leaps. Those are all of the options. Experiment with all of those tools to discover new melodies.

4. When chords change, the melody will usually be on a chord tone as well. Experiment with picking a tone in each chord to target with your voice.

5. Keep it simple, especially at first.

HARMONIZING A MELODY

If you have a melody already and you want to harmoniz, here are a few tips:

1. Experiment with adding bass notes. This can really help find the key and harmony.

2. Stong beats (beats 1 & 3) will usually be on a chord tone. This means there is usually only a few options that really fit a particular bar.

3. Most melodies can be harmonized with the chord scales found on page #

POP SONG MAD LIB #1 - Script

I'LL BE YOUR (20:_____)

(VERSE 1)
I WAKE UP IN THE (1: _____) MORNING LIGHT,
FEELING (2: _____) AND (3: _____) ALL DAY,
I SEE YOUR (4: _____) IN MY DREAMS EVERY NIGHT,
HOPING YOU'LL (5: _____) MY WAY.

(CHORUS)
YOU'RE MY (6: _____), MY (7: _____), MY EVERYTHING,
I'LL (8: _____) FOR YOU, JUST SAY THE (9: _____),
WITH YOU, I FEEL SO (10: _____),
TOGETHER, WE'LL (11: _____) THE WORLD, FOREVERMORE.

(VERSE 2)
WE DANCE TO THE (12: _____) BEAT OF OUR HEARTS,
EVERY (13: _____) IS A (14: _____) (15: _____) WITH YOU,
WHEN YOU (16: _____), MY WHOLE WORLD STARTS,
I KNOW OUR LOVE IS (17: _____) AND TRUE.

(BRIDGE)
THROUGH THE (18: _____) AND THE (19: _____),
I'LL BE YOUR (20: _____), FOREVER WE'LL (21: _____).

COUNTRY SONG MAD LIB #1 - Script

THROUGH THE (19:_____)

(VERSE 1)
UNDER THE (1: _____) SKY SO WIDE,
DRIVING DOWN THE (2: _____) BY YOUR SIDE,
YOUR (3: _____) ON MY (4: _____) FEELS RIGHT,
HOLDING YOU CLOSE THROUGH THE (5: _____) NIGHT.

(CHORUS)
YOU'RE MY (6: _____), MY (7: _____), MY EVERYTHING,
I'LL (8: _____) FOR YOU, JUST SAY THE (9: _____),
WITH YOU, I FEEL SO (10: _____),
TOGETHER, WE'LL (11: _____) THIS OLD (12: _____) FOREVERMORE.

(VERSE 2)
WE DANCE TO THE (13: _____) BEAT OF THE BAND,
EVERY (14: _____) FEELS LIKE (15: _____) (16: _____),
WHEN YOU (17: _____), I TAKE YOUR HAND,
I KNOW OUR LOVE IS (18: _____) AND GRAND.

(BRIDGE)
THROUGH THE (19: _____) AND THE (20: _____),
FOREVER WE'LL STAND.

HEAVY METAL MAD LIB #1 - Script

YOUR MY (9:_____)

(VERSE 1)
IN THE (1: _____) NIGHT, THE (2: NOUN) WILL ROAR,
SHADOWS (3: _____) ACROSS THE (4: _____) FLOOR,
MY HEART (5: _____), FEELING (6: _____),
THROUGH THE (7: _____) CHAOS, WE (8: _____).

(CHORUS)
YOU'RE MY (9: _____), MY (10: _____), MY ETERNAL FLAME,
I'LL (11: _____) FOR YOU, JUST SAY THE (12: _____),
WITH YOU, I FEEL SO (13: _____),
TOGETHER, WE'LL (14: _____)
THIS (15: _____) (16: _____) FOREVERMORE.

(VERSE 2)
WE (17: _____) TO THE (18: _____) BEAT OF THE DRUMS,
WHEN YOU (19: _____), I TAKE YOUR HAND,
OUR SPIRITS (20: _____) IN THE (21: _____) NIGHT,
I KNOW OUR LOVE IS (22: _____) AND GRAND.

JAZZ STANDARD MAD LIB #1 - Script

THROUGH THE (7:_____)

(VERSE 1)
IN THE (1: _____) EVENING,
UNDER THE (2: _____) LIGHTS,
WE (3: _____) TOGETHER, FEELING (4: _____),
YOUR (5: _____) NEAR, SO (6: _____) AND BRIGHT,
THROUGH THE (7: _____), EVERYTHING FEELS RIGHT.

(VERSE 2)
STARS (8: _____) ABOVE US, IN THE (9: ADJECTIVE) NIGHT,
WE (10: ____) TO THE RHYTHM, FEELING (11: _____),
YOUR (12: _____) NEAR, SO (13: _____) AND LIGHT,
TOGETHER, WE MAKE EVERYTHING FEEL RIGHT.

(BRIDGE)
IN THIS (14: _____) OF OURS, WE'LL NEVER PART,
THE MUSIC (15: _____), LIKE THE BEAT OF MY HEART,
HAND IN HAND, IN THIS (16: _____) LAND.

(VERSE 3)
IN THE (17: _____) EVENING,
UNDER THE (18: _____) LIGHTS,
WE (19: _____) TOGETHER, FEELING (20: _____),
YOUR (21: _____) NEAR, SO (22: _____) AND BRIGHT,
THROUGH THE (7: _____), EVERYTHING FEELS RIGHT.

RAP MAD LIB #1 - Script

I KNOW OUR LOVE IS (21:_____)

(VERSE 1)
IN THE (1: _____) STREETS, UNDER THE (2: _____) LIGHTS,
WE (3:_____ ____) ALL DAY, MAKING (4: _____) SO TIGHT,
YOUR (5: _____) BY MY SIDE, WE (6: _____) SO HIGH,
THROUGH THE (7: _____), WE (8: _____) AND FLY.

(CHORUS)
YOU'RE MY (9: _____), MY (10: _____), MY RIDE OR DIE,
I'LL (11: _____) FOR YOU, JUST LIKE (12: _____),
WITH YOU, I FEEL SO (13: _____),
TOGETHER, WE'LL (14: _____)
THIS (15: _____) (16: _____) SKY HIGH.

(VERSE 2)
WE (17: _____) TO THE (18: _____) BEAT OF THE SOUND,
WHEN YOU (19: _____), I KNOW WE'RE BOUND,
OUR (20: _____) IN THE NIGHT,
I KNOW OUR LOVE IS (21: _____) AND RIGHT.