

WS11 COLLEGE Lesson Plan



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Title: Music; **THE FIRST FAMILY OF COUNTRY MUSIC: THE CARTER FAMILY**
 Inspiration, Support & Love Transaction
Subjects: English, History, Critical Thinking, Creative Writing, Public Speaking
Length: Three Class Sessions
Grade Level: College
Context (Topic and Summary of Lesson Identified): The topic of this lesson is, "Music: A source of Encouragement and Support"

This lesson plan is designed to educate students about the history of The Great Depression, while also encouraging them to make a connection to music as an inspiration. This will hopefully inspire them to create their own music and art as well. One of the goals of this lesson is for students to understand the history of the Great Depression as it relates specifically to family life during that time, and, in turn, how the music of the Carter family uplifted people. The lesson will encourage the students to make a connection to the ways that music evokes emotions, which will inspire them as they write and create their own poetry, and eventually song. The poetry the students write will be entirely up to them as far as the style of poetry. The guideline and overall idea for the poetry will be for them to create a poem/song that will inspire, encourage, and/or celebrate moving beyond difficult times. The poetry does not have to be personal to them, but could be if they so choose. It could be that they want to write their poetry from the perspective of someone during the Great Depression. The lesson will allow students to apply what they learn about the Great Depression into their poetry and by creating their own words and eventually song (song design). By song design, I mean that students that do not already play a musical instrument, could explain the style of their song and what instruments they would apply to their words. Students may choose to learn to play for presentations, but it is not required. Students that do play a musical instrument could accompany their poetry/song as a performance piece if they so choose, but all students may just choose to read their poetry aloud if they would like. The presentations are not necessarily a requirement, as this is to encourage public speaking along with creativity. I think that some students may choose not to present if their poetry is very personal to them, and I think that is fine as well. Within this lesson, students will also have an opportunity to explore the Carter family and their passion for music historically and inspiration to create.

Objective: Students will develop an understanding of the history of the Great Depression, music and writing their own poetry and music. Students will be able to identify the ways that the Carter family inspired others during the time of the Great Depression and how this relates to music bringing together communities. "Keep on the Sunny Side of Life" became the song to inspire and uplift during the Great Depression. Students may be asked to reflect upon how the words to this song helped to bring families through an incredibly difficult time. This will allow them to learn about history and culture, and will also allow them to apply this knowledge and creativity to create their own poetry. Students will also explore life during the Great Depression and compare it historically to modern. In addition, students will design and plan an event in which they present their ballads, organize an event which not only demonstrates all that they have learned and their creative planning, but also encourages a sense of community. This event could be a one day class presentation, or could be expanded due to the interest of the students and instructor.

Goals & Objectives:

- Students will understand The Great Depression history; culture, music, economy, art and how it inspires people historically and in modern times
- Creativity encouraged through poetry writing and song
- Knowledge of music as applied to poetry words and song
- Knowledge of the Carter family history as discussed in WoodSongs episode
- Organizational skills through the development of presentations and/or community event if applicable
- Networking and critical thinking skills through the organization of presentations and/or community event
- Builds Communication Skills
- Encourages working collaboratively in an effort to creatively plan presentations and event
- Encourages descriptive writing

Introduce the following to discuss:

Vocabulary and Terms: The Great Depression, literal language, figurative language, refuge (as referenced by Michael Johnathon in expressing the quote by Maya Angelou)

In addition, students will be able to identify the characteristics that identify their chosen style of poetry. Meaning, if they choose to write a ballad, they will be able to identify what makes a ballad a ballad. The following terms are valuable to introduce before students begin to write their poem/song:

Alliteration: Repetition of sounds through more than one word or syllable

Consonance: The same or similar consonant sound repeated in the stressed syllable, preceded by uncommon vowel sounds

Figure of Speech: a rhetorical device that achieves a special effect by using words in distinctive ways

Metaphor: comparison between two unlike things

Simile: comparison between two unlike things using "like" or "as"

Personification: a non-human thing is endowed with human characteristics

Characterization: the author's expression of a character's personality through the use of action, dialogue, thought, or commentary by the narrator or another character

Point of view: the vantage point from which the author presents action of the story. Who is telling the story? An all-knowing author? A voice limited to the views of one character? The voice and thoughts of one character? Does the author change point of view in the story? Why? Point of view is often considered the technical aspect of fiction which leads the critic most readily into the problems and meanings of the story

Symbol: related to imagery. It is something which is itself yet stands for or means something else. It tends to be more singular, a bit more fixed than imagery

Imagery: the collection of images within a literary work. Used to evoke atmosphere, mood, and tension

Tone: suggests an attitude toward the subject which is communicated by the words the author chooses

Hyperbole: obvious and intentional exaggeration

Lytic: Of or relating to a category of poetry that expresses subjective thoughts and feelings, often in a songlike style or form

Narrative: Consisting of or characterized by the telling of a story

Ode: a type of lyrical stanza

Onomatopoeia: The formation or use of words such as buzz or murmur that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to

Rhyme: Correspondence of terminal sounds of words or of lines of verse; a poem or verse having a regular correspondence of sounds, especially at the ends of lines; poetry or verse of this kind

Verse: a single metrical line in a poetic composition; one line of poetry; a division of a metrical composition, such as a stanza of a poem or hymn

Literal Language: Literal language means exactly what it says

Figurative Language: Figurative language uses similes, metaphors, hyperbole, and personification to describe something often through comparison

Critical Thinking: Responses may vary, which is encouraged. Each student should be encouraged to really explore what they think it means to think critically and focus on fair-minded critical thinking, which is thinking and exploring all opinions and thinking thoroughly, while also being fair in the process. Discussion could expand into developing intellectual character as well.

Creative Thinking: Responses may vary

Description of Lesson/Activities & Procedure:

Introduction: The lesson will extend into three classes and may vary depending on class design. The lesson will be introduced with a fundamental question that allows students to begin thinking about music and how they may use music and art to inspire, encourage and build community. In addition, Michael Johnathon references a quote from Maya Angelou and this would be an excellent way to begin the discussion of this show and all that it entails. The quote is as follows: "Music was my refuge. I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness." Ask students to reflect and write down their feelings about this quote. It's a great way to connect the overall goal of this lesson as a way to think about music as an inspiration and also the various types of emotions it evokes. Music is also used during times of celebration, which is certainly something to celebrate and reflect upon as well!

For the purpose of this lesson, students will reference the way that the music of the Carter family inspired others during the time of the Great Depression. How did the words to, "Keep on the Sunny Side" uplift the spirits of families? This will help the students being to think about music and how it relates to their lives and how it helps them through difficult times and also during times of celebration.

Discussion may also begin to explore what students know about the Carter family music and access prior knowledge before watching the episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour. When learning something new, it is important that it attach to something you already know. We have to engage in it in order to really learn. Reading or lecture will not ensure it is part of our working memory. Through watching and listening to WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour, students will be engaged in their learning and, in turn, inspired to create their own poetry and music. This episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour is dedicated to the Carter family. Within this episode, John Carter Cash, son of Johnny and June Carter Cash, discusses the love of his family and the early roots to their music.

Students will write their own poem that they feel is inspirational. The poem will also be extended to have the students transition the poem into a song and then create their own version of this song. This will include having the students explain the style of the song, the instruments they would want included in the song, and the overall style of it. If students have a musical background, they may also want to include an actual performance of their song with their instrument of choice. Ask students to reflect upon the sentiments shared by John Carter Cash throughout this episode of WoodSongs. How did his reflection of his family inspire you? The goal is for the students to recognize the connection of music as inspiration and bringing people together. This will ignite the love and passion for creating and making it their own. The poetry/song writing will allow the students to think about symbolism of words, literal and figurative language. How does it inspire you? What instruments will you include? Will you turn it into more of a folk song or ballad? Will it be acoustic? Ask students to think about John Carter Cash and the discussion he and Michael Johnathon have about the ways that the Carter family brought people together with their music and uplifted them.

Two class sessions will be devoted to this process, and then the third could involve planning for a presentation day and/or event. If students do not wish to share their poetry, I think the instructor could have them write an alternate piece in which they write something from the perspective of a family during the Great Depression. Meaning, if the student writes their poem and it is too personal and they do not feel comfortable sharing, I think that is fine of course, and they could have something less personal share. This will allow them to still be a part of the planning process, which encourages networking skills and working collaboratively with others.

The instructor may create a rubric based upon the design of the activities to their class specifically. Meaning, if the class does not do an additional event outside of class presentations, the rubric would be different. Some possible guidelines for the overall goal of this would be the following:

- Creativity and thoughtfulness in poetry/song design
- Understanding of the Great Depression
- Understanding of the music of the Carter family and how it inspired during the Great Depression
- Understanding of the ways music evokes emotion
- Understanding of the ways that music delivers a message
- Understanding of music as community building
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