

# WoodSongs WS4 HIGH Lesson Plan



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**Title: Celebration of Pete Seeger**

**Subject: Music, Social Studies, Language Arts**

**Length of Lesson: Two-Three Classes (may vary)**

**Grade Level: High School**

This episode celebrates Pete Seeger, one of the legendary folk singers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pete Seeger introduced artists such as Bob Dylan, Judy Collins, and Joan Baez, toured with Woody Guthrie, and won multiple Grammy Awards. Artists in this episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour pay tribute to Pete Seeger. The first song of the show, “I don’t want your millions” is performed by Rik Palieri. Ask students: What does this song mean to you? Reflect upon the words. First artist, Rik Palieri says he discovered Pete Seeger at a young age. Pete Seeger influenced many artisan song writers and became a mentor. Rik also says that when you became Pete’s friend, you became his friend for life.

The Clearwater was a dream that Pete had to clean up the Hudson River. For over 45 years, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc. has been at the forefront of the environmental movement as champion of the Hudson River, working to pass landmark legislation like the Clean Water Act, and providing innovative educational programs, environmental advocacy, and musical celebrations, including the renowned annual Clearwater Festival, to inspire, educate, and activate millions of people. (<http://www.clearwater.org/about/>) The mission statement of the Clearwater is as follows:

*Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc. is a 501(c)3 tax exempt nonprofit, member-supported corporation whose mission is to preserve and protect the Hudson River, its tributaries and related bodies of water. As an organization, Clearwater works to provide innovative environmental programs, advocacy, and celebrations designed to inspire, educate and activate the next generation of environmental leaders. (<http://www.clearwater.org/about/>)*

Rik Palieri also discussed The Almanac Singers. The Almanac Singers sang songs about peace and freedom. They really believed better times were coming. They got together and sang for all kinds of causes. One of the causes they were particularly passionate about was the labor movement. In 1941 when the strikes were on, they went around the country singing for the CIO Union. Woody Guthrie was part of this as well.

Rick Nestler, also a friend of Pete Seeger worked for the Clearwater Movement. He performs “The River that Flows Both Ways”. Rick Nestler is a ship captain and was also a member of the Hudson River Sloop Singers. He is an educator of the Clearwater. The next guest, Frank Hamilton, is part of folk music history. He is one of the founding members of Chicago’s Old Town School of Folk Music. Frank Hamilton performs “We Shall Overcome”. Pete Seeger wrote “We Shall Overcome”, which was a civil rights anthem. Pete Seeger was also very generous with his art. He truly had a global view of what music can do and believed that if we all communicate and share our music, the world can be a better place. Michael Johnathon points

out that Pete Seeger did not live his life in a box. He paved a way and expressed his beliefs. During the show, Melissa Deaton Johnathon performs, "Little Boxes". Michael asks the guests, "Why was this song important to Pete Seeger?" The artists respond that they feel that Pete valued individuality and encouraged people to think and work independently.

Michael Johnathon offers incredibly encouraging words throughout the show. He talks about the importance of encouraging our audience to be proactive, to be involved in our communities, and to do things to make our hometowns better. He also expresses how beneficial it is to not only learn to play music, but also learn how to present it. Pete made his own banjo and Vega Banjo became interested in making it. The banjo has on it Pete's words which are as follows: This machine surrounds hate and forces it to surrender." Students are encouraged to reflect upon what these words mean to them.

At the end of the show, Michael Johnathon says, "Pete Seeger used music to bring people together. He said he wanted to turn the clock back to a time of small villages where people took care of each other. He was an integral part of so many careers. He sang in concert halls, grammar schools, yet would stand in on a street corner to play for important issues." Michael then encourages everyone to get involved! Go down the road with your children, pick up litter, do something good for the community. Michael goes on to say that Pete set a good example of how artists can make the world better; think globally, act locally. Pete truly believed in the music and the power of its message and not just selling records. Michael encourages everyone to get out there, use your music and act locally. "Where Have All the Flowers Gone" is an example of Pete's trademark of getting the audience to sing. Students may use the Clearwater and WoodSongs as an example when thinking how they may use their own songs and performance skills to help out in their community. Students are encouraged to think of the steps necessary to make this happen.

### ***Connection to Language Arts Standards:***

- **Analyze works of arts influenced by experiences or historical and cultural events through production, performance or exhibition**
- Distinguish among a variety of regional arts events and resources and analyze methods of selection and admission
- Describe and analyze the effects that works in the arts have on groups, individuals and the culture
- Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
- Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge
- Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information)

### ***Connection to Music Standards:***

- Developing music literacy skills
- Critically listening to recordings of music (analyze, evaluate)
- Manipulating elements in the music to explore expressive options (interpret)

- Reflecting on self and peer performance to identify areas of success and for improvement (evaluate and refine)
- to describe genre, type, style, historical context, purpose of specific works
- Describe how expressive qualities (such as dynamics, tempo, articulation ,phrasing) and their interpretive decisions convey creator's intent (interpret)

*Connection to Science Standards:*

- Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Personal and community health; population growth; natural resources; environmental quality; natural and human induced hazards; science and technology in local, national, and global challenges

*Vocabulary:*

*Clearwater Project: In addition to the show, students may use the following as a reference: <http://www.clearwater.org/about/>*

**Description of Lesson/Activities & Procedures:**

Before watching the episode, begin with a brief warm up discussion, which will allow the students to begin thinking about what the artists within this episode will discuss. Some examples of questions to prompt discussion may include the following: What do you think are some ways to take care of your environment, in turn, your community? How do you believe that music helps to express and explain important issues? What are some ways that music helps promote a sense of community and bring people together? How does music make an impact in your life? Think of some examples of songs that allow you to recognize the importance of a particular issue? What are some ways that you may express yourselves through music and art?

After this warm up discussion, students will then watch the episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour. After watching the episode, ask students to reflect upon the show and write down some of the main points that stand out to them within the show. The first activity for this lesson will have students research Pete Seeger and the Clearwater Project. One resource for their research is as follows:

<http://www.clearwater.org/>

Students should explore the Clearwater Project and the legendary Pete Seeger and relay their information in an informational text format. Then, students will take what they have learned about the Clearwater Project and use it as a guide to create a community project of their own. Students will reflect upon some of the examples and also some type of artistic expression to demonstrate the issue at hand. For instance, students are encouraged to think about a way to help their community. Some possible examples may include: a community food drive, coat drive, environmental care, or a fundraiser for a specific cause. Encourage students to brainstorm and come up with creative projects of their own in which they will promote and/or raise awareness of their event. Students are encouraged to include music and/or art such as a poem, painting, or some type of artistic expression. This activity is really left open for creativity and encourages students to think critically and creatively as they design their project. In addition, this will be group work, which encourages students to work collaboratively. Both tasks in this lesson plan, encourage students to think about presenting information in two different ways; one is informational and the other creatively. Pete Seeger encouraged us to play and create music and that this will bring people together. We believe this to be true and hope to inspire the students. How did Pete Seeger demonstrate this in his life and through his music?

Continuing, students will also write a one page reflection in which they explain how The Clearwater Project and WoodSongs inspired them to design their project and expand their message into their communities. This will encourage their writing skills and also help them to make connections and apply what they've learned throughout the project design. In conclusion, this lesson includes (in this order):

- Warm Up Discussion
- Watch Episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour
- Wrap Up Discussion
- Students write down main points from episode and think about how Pete Seeger believed music could change the world. In what ways did Pete Seeger apply this to his life and inspire other artists?
- Students research the Clearwater Project and Pete Seeger and write information in an information text format (one and a half pages)
- Students then work in groups on project and include additional one page reflection
- Project may be extended into a WoodSongs Coffeehouse

**Materials/Media Needed:** Computer or iPad and materials may vary depending on project design

**Rubric:** This rubric is open for design by the teacher and may include the guidelines that the teacher feels are most important from the project.

### Creative Project/Presentation Scoring Sheet

Creativity/Presentation of material	/
	/
	/
	/
	/
	/
	/
<b>Total</b>	<b>/100</b>