

WoodSongs WS5 HIGH Lesson Plan



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Title: Bela Fleck, Abigail Washburn and The Banjo

Subject: Language Arts, Music

Length of Lesson: three class periods

Grade Level: 9th-12th

The topic of this lesson is the banjo. This lesson plan is designed to explore the history of the banjo in Appalachia. This lesson encourages students to reflect upon the various sounds and types of banjo within episode 782 of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour, which features Bela Fleck and Abigail Washburn. Before watching the episode, there will be a warm up discussion time which will allow students to access prior knowledge. Bela Fleck and Abigail Washburn play several different banjos throughout this one episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour. In addition, this lesson will inspire students to reflect upon making music their own as referenced by Michael Jonathon. Students will reflect upon Bela Fleck and Abigail Washburn's version of "I've Been Working on the Railroad". They have taken a very old song and made it their own. Students will explore the various instruments and sounds and then write down which sounds and songs stood out most to them and why. Students will recall the sounds of the various banjos used throughout their performances. These include the following: Banjo uke, cello banjo, fretless banjo, and open-back frailing banjo.

The activity within this lesson will have students choose and reflect upon a song they like, and then create their own version of this song. Michael Jonathon mentions the love of art and music at the end of the episode. He references an inspirational quote by William Barkley which is as follows: "There are two great days in a person's life, the day we are born and the day we discover why." Ask students to reflect upon this quote as they begin to think about what song they will choose and why they want to choose this song. What does this song mean to you? How does it inspire you? The goal is for the students to not simply choose any song that comes to mind, but rather one that inspires them and has meaning to them. This will ignite the love and passion for creating and making it their own. Michael Jonathon also references in the show making a song your own. Students are encouraged to do this and also reflect on the words of this song and what it means to them. This will allow the students to think about symbolism of words, literal and figurative language. Students will list and explore the following literary aspects (not all aspects will be in each song) in the song of their choice: alliteration, ballad, consonance, figure of speech, hyperbole, lyric, metaphor, tone, narrative, ode, onomatopoeia, personification, rhyme, simile, trope, verse, imagery, characterization and point of view.

Connection to Language Arts Standards:

- Analyze, interpret and evaluate other or own compositions and performances, using specific musical terms and elements to describe their technical and expressive qualities
- Compare and contrast the quality of compositions and performances, using specific musical terms and elements to describe their technical and expressive qualities

- Use elements of music (including melodic motif and development) to describe how musicians compose, perform, and improvise
- Identify and compare various styles and functions (recreational, ceremonial, and artistic expression) of music
- Analyze and describe how factors such as time, place, and belief systems are reflected in music
- Analyze and describe music's influence on belief systems, its influence on history, and its ability to shape culture
- Know how media, art processes, subject matter, symbols, ideas, and themes communicate cultural and aesthetic value
- Identify the elements of literature (plot and structure, character, setting, point of view, language and style, theme, irony, and symbol) in a work that contribute to the understanding of human experience
- Analyze the features and purposes of literary genres (novels, short stories, plays, poetry, essays, biographies)
- Interpret, critique, or evaluate fiction and nonfiction in various genres
- Explain how ideas, thoughts, feelings, and cultural traditions are reflected in literary works

Vocabulary within the lesson: Banjo Uke, Fretless Banjo, Cello Banjo, Frailing banjo style, alliteration, ballad, consonance, figure of speech, hyperbole, lyric, metaphor, narrative, ode, onomatopoeia, personification, rhyme, simile, verse, characterization, point of view, symbol, tone, imagery

Reference: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

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

Ballad: <http://www.encyclopediaofappalachia.com/entry.php?rec=31>

Banjo: <http://www.encyclopediaofappalachia.com/entry.php?rec=32> also, use WoodSongs episode as a reference to the sounds of the various banjos.

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

Lyric: 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

Description of Lesson/Activities & Procedures:

Before watching the episode, there will be a warm up discussion time which will allow students to access prior knowledge. Questions for this lesson may include: "Have you ever thought about the various types and sounds of one instrument? For instance, have you ever thought about the similarities and differences of one instrument; the guitar, the banjo, drums. Bela Fleck and Abigail Washburn will play several different banjos throughout this one episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour. Other questions may allow students to explore how they feel the dialogue and conversation may help them to better retain information versus learning about the banjo in only a textbook. This will allow them to get excited about what they are about to hear in the show. Students will then watch episode 781 of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour featuring Bela Fleck and Abigail Washburn.

This lesson will inspire students to reflect upon making music their own as referenced by Michael Jonathon. For instance, Bela Fleck and Abigail Washburn's version of, "I've Been Working on the Railroad". They have taken a very old song and made it their own. Students will explore the various instruments and sounds throughout the show. In addition, students will recall the sounds of the various banjos used throughout their performances. These include the following: Banjo uke, cello banjo, fretless banjo, and open-back frailing banjo.

The activity of this lesson will have students choose and think about a song they like, and then create their own version of this song. Michael Jonathon reflects upon the love of art and music at the end of the episode. He references an inspirational quote by William Barkley to begin the activity: "There are two great days in a person's life, the day we are born and the day we discover why." Ask students to reflect upon this quote as they begin to think about what song they will choose and why they want to choose this song. What does this song mean to you? How does it inspire you? The goal is for the students to not simply choose any song that comes to mind, but rather one that inspires them and has meaning to them, because this will ignite the love and passion for creating and making it their own. What instruments will you include? Will you slow it down? Will you turn it into more of a folk song or ballad? Will it be acoustic? Michael Jonathon references in the show making a song your own. Students are encouraged to do this as they create their own version of a song. For the purpose of this class, students will write down a description of their song choice and how they plan to make it their own version. This will allow students to explore the various literary aspects of the song, the words and what the words mean to them, sounds of the instruments, and also allows them to creatively think about their own version of the song. Students will then plan an additional class to explain their song choice and how they've made it their own. Students have the option to perform their song if they choose to do so. Ideas may be expanded upon in the coffeehouse, or if teachers wish to extend the lesson, and students may then actually perform their songs. The overall goal is for student's to select a song that has meaning to them and then make it their own, as demonstrated by the artists in the episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour. This allows them to think creatively and also explore the sounds of various instruments. Within this lesson, students also learn about the various sounds of instruments.

Materials/Media Needed:

- Access to computer/iPad to listen to song students choose and also to explore various instrument sounds, the banjo sounds & research vocabulary used and also literary terms to explore and apply to song
- Also, students will research songs in which artists have made a song more of their own version to include their own unique sound.

Rubric & Guidelines:

Demonstrates an understanding of artistic and musical expression	<i>Shows an enriched and strong understanding of the episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour and is able to participate and recount main points from the episode.</i>	<i>Shows an understanding of the episode.</i>	<i>Shows somewhat of an understanding of the episode but main points are not clear.</i>	<i>Does not seem to understand the connections the episode is portraying through music and artistic expression.</i>
Demonstrates an understanding of creatively creating their own song	<i>Understanding is clear of how the episode connects to creating their own song</i>	<i>Is able to somewhat make the connection of information from the episode to creating their own version of their chosen song</i>	<i>Demonstrates an understanding of musical and art expression demonstrated in the episode, but not entirely connecting it to creating their own song</i>	<i>An understanding of the episode is not evident.</i>
Song is designed creatively and in a way that will demonstrate meaning	<i>Very well</i>	<i>Fairly well</i>	<i>Needs some extra guidance</i>	<i>Exhibits little to none of the desired goal</i>
Stays on Task while designing own version of song	<i>Stays on task all (100%) of the time.</i>	<i>Stays on task most (99-90%) of the time.</i>	<i>Stays on task some (89%-75%) of the time.</i>	<i>Stays more off task than on task.</i>