

# WoodSongs WS8 HIGH Lesson Plan



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**Title: Celebration of Folk and Bluegrass**

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

**Length of Lesson: Three Class Periods (May vary depending on class times)**

**Grade Level: High School**

**This episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour is a celebration of Folk and Bluegrass music.** The first artist, Bryon Sutton, discusses that he listened to local musicians, a community of music, and a combination of artists such as Doc Watson as well. Bryon Sutton performs a song in which the words include: "Show me a place where I don't have to worry, show me a place where I don't have to hurry and that's where I belong." Encourage the students to think about what does this mean to them? What does this look like to you? What would be your place where you would go in which you would not have to worry and would feel peaceful. This conversation will allow students to begin thinking about the community of music and ways in which brings people together. Encourage students to think about the front porch dynamic of music. As Michael Johnathon and the artists in the show discuss, music really can be about sitting on a front porch and not needing a big production. Music is so enriching to our lives and encourage students to explore this, and not only the focus on music as a money making tool. Ask students what they would play on their front porch and to reflect upon the tradition of music.

In addition, ask students what instruments are being played? Find one other song in which one of these instruments is being played and compare the style. Is it similar, is it different? How so? The next artist on this episode, Dom Flemons, discusses that he started thinking about music in many different ways. Ask students how they may do this as well? Consider different genres of music. Dom is a Grammy winning artist. Dom is one of the few black banjo players in North America. He plays banjo and harmonica at the same time and has such an incredibly unique style.

*Connection to Arts & Humanities Standards:*

- Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with music
- recognize, describe, and compare various musical forms
- the elements of music, dance and drama are intentionally applied in creating and performing
- listen to and analyze how changing different elements results in different musical effects
- Developing music literacy skills
- Critically listening to recordings of music (analyze, evaluate)
- Manipulating elements in the music to explore expressive options (interpret)
- Describe how expressive qualities (such as dynamics, tempo, articulation ,phrasing) and their interpretive decisions convey creator's intent (interpret)

*Connection to Language Arts Standards:*

- Describe and analyze the effects that works in the arts have on groups, individuals and the culture
- Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information)
- Apply the Reading standards to the following range of text types, with texts selected from a broad range of cultures and periods: Includes the subgenres of narrative poems, lyrical poems, free verse poems, sonnets, odes, ballads, and epics

**Vocabulary:**

**Banjo:** <http://www.encyclopediaofappalachia.com/entry.php?rec=32>

**Genre:** a category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter

**Folk Music:** <http://encyclopediaofappalachia.com/entry.php?rec=88>

**Bluegrass Music:** <http://encyclopediaofappalachia.com/entry.php?rec=40>

**Ballad:** A ballad is a narrative song in which each stanza of text is sung to the same melody. Brought to the American colonies by the earliest British settlers, the ballad form has remained in oral tradition through the present day, particularly in rural parts of the southeastern United States.

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

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

Have students reflect upon the following quote as part of the warm-up discussion: "To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of the arts" Henry David Thoreau. This will also allow them to think about the ways in which Michael Johnathon and the artists on the show use their music to encourage community and togetherness.

Bryon Sutton performs a song in which the words include: "Show me a place where I don't have to worry, show me a place where I don't have to hurry and that's where I belong." Encourage the students to think about what does this mean to them? What does this look like to you? What would be your place where you would go in which you would not have to worry and would feel peaceful. This conversation will allow students to begin thinking about the community of music and ways in which brings people together. Encourage students to think about the front porch dynamic of music. As Michael Johnathon and the artists in the show discuss, music really can be about sitting on a front porch and not needing a big production. Music is so enriching to our lives and encourage students to explore this, and not only the focus on music as a money making tool. Ask students what they would play on their front porch and to reflect upon the tradition of music. Once students have reflected upon their idea of a place where they do not have to worry or hurry, as Bryon sings about, students will then write a poem that describes it. Students are encouraged to research examples of Appalachian style poetry and also ballads.

**Tips for writing a ballad as listed on Purdue Owl:** <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

**Ballads tell of an event. They were often used to spread the news, provide entertainment, or create a "bigger than real life" story.**

## Ballad Writing Tips (Purdue Owl)

- **often have verses of four lines**
- **usually have a rhyming pattern: either abac, aabb or acbc (usually the easiest to rhyme)**
- repetition often found in ballads
  - entire stanzas can be repeated like a song's chorus
  - lines can be repeated but each time a certain word is changed
  - a question and answer format can be built into a ballad: one stanza asks a question and the next stanza answers the question
- Ballads contain a lot of dialogue.
- Action is often described in the first person
- Two characters in the ballad can speak to each other on alternating lines
- Sequences of "threes" often occur: three kisses, three tasks, three events, for example

In addition, ask students what instruments are being played? Find one other song in which one of these instruments is being played and compare the style. Is it similar, is it different? How so? The next artist on this episode, Dom Flemons, discusses that he started thinking about music in many different ways. Ask students how they may do this as well? Consider different genres of music. Dom is a Grammy winning artist. Dom is one of the few black banjo players in North America. He plays banjo and harmonica at the same time and has such an incredibly unique style.

### *Activities of this lesson include:*

- Warm Up Discussion
- Students will write a description of a place in which they feel they don't have to worry
- Students will also list musical instruments played throughout the episode and then compare and contrast a song with the same instruments.
- Students will also write a one page paper on the history of the banjo using the episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour and one additional source in which they research the banjo.
- Write a poem and/or ballad based upon their description of a place in which they feel they do not have hurry (as referenced by the song performed by Bryon Sutton)

### *Materials/Media Needed:*

- Access to computer/IPad to listen to song students choose and also to explore various instrument sounds

**Rubric:**

<b>Demonstrates an understanding of artistic and musical expression</b>	<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>
<b>Demonstrates an understanding of various musical genres and styles</b>	<i>Demonstrates an understanding and is able to compare and contrast various styles of music</i>	<i>Is able to somewhat compare and contrast various music styles</i>	<i>Demonstrates an understanding of musical and art expression demonstrated in the episode but not able to compare and contrast entirely</i>	<i>An understanding of the episode is not evident.</i>
<b>Appreciation of how all musical genres create emotion, tell a story and encourage community</b>	<i>Very well</i>	<i>Fairly well</i>	<i>Needs some extra guidance</i>	<i>Exhibits little to none of the desired goal</i>
<b>Remains on Task within the lesson</b>	<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>

