

# WS18 MIDDLE SCHOOL Lesson Plan

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**WoodSongs Classroom**

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**Title: Roger McGuinn; A Folk Icon and Internet Pioneer**

**Subject: Folk Music and Community**

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

**Level: 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

## **Introduction and Overview:**

This episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour features folk artist and founding member of the The Byrds, Roger McGuinn. Roger McGuinn is a Grammy award winning artist, member of the Rock N' Roll Hall of Fame, and founding member of The Byrds. The Byrds formed during the 1960's and have a very unique sound. Roger McGuinn's roots are very connected to folk music. Roger performs several songs throughout the broadcast. He performs both old, as well as new songs that he has written and recorded. The Byrds became famous for songs such as, "Mr. Tambourine Man", and "Turn, Turn, Turn." Roger introduced the sound of the 12-string Rickenbacker guitar and the sound that would be called the, 'Jingle-Jangle Sound'.

Roger tells the audience how he grew to love folk music through the introduction to it from a music teacher. In fact, we also learn in the show that preserving folk music is so important to Roger, that he created a virtual space to preserve it online called the "The Folk Den", which we will talk more about within the lesson. In addition, while Roger started as a folk singer, he then became the leader of The Byrds, but pulled back from the idea of stardom and rock n' roll, and returned to folk music. As Roger performs, Michael Johnathon says to the live audience, "I feel like I am witnessing an epic reconstruction of musical history!" This really says so much about the artistry and talent of Roger McGuinn. This would be a nice reference for the students to really grasp the talent and art that they are experiencing while they watch and listen to Roger perform.

Also, please direct the student's attention to Michael Johnathon's opening song. There is so much value in the words to this song. Encourage the students to think about what the words mean to them. Encourage the students to think about the "front porch" dynamic of music.

Guide students as they make a connection and realize that 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. Michael Johnathon says that one of the most beautiful art forms is folk music. Michael references the acoustic rural sound of folk music that celebrates communities and families. Michael then says something that I really want to focus on within the lesson. Michael says, "The greatest stage in the world is your own front porch." We will focus on this aspect and encourage students within this lesson. Words to this song include, "We need a front porch around the world." "We got to slow it down and learn to sit a spell." We will explore the meaning of these words in more depth and have activities within the lesson to focus on this message.

## **The Folk Den Project**

This lesson will also focus on "The Folk Den Project", which is a project that Roger McGuinn pioneered. Roger began this online group in 1995, when websites and the internet were not nearly as common as today, to say the least. Folk Den archives global folk music, and is one of the very

first streaming websites in internet history. The Folk Den is an online document of folk music and has been archiving amazing traditional folk songs since. Roger researches the song and includes the history as well as the chords to learn.

One other aspect that we want to focus on within this lesson is within the words of the other guest John Lomax. John's family has been preserving and educating about folk music for many years. John says, "The song is the story." One of the activities will encourage students to reflect upon this and to explore a song that speaks to them and to explain the story that it is telling.

### **Activity 1:**

Students will journal about what stands out to them within the episode. Students will then respond, in a journal format, to three guided questions to help them to make connections and apply what they've learned. The prompt questions are as follows:

1. What do you think Michael Johnathon means when he sings the words, "We need a front porch around the world."
2. What does your front porch look like? Explain that this is symbolism, and that the goal of the activity is not to describe their actual structural front porch, but rather, where they may sing and perform. Where may they recite poetry in their home or school? Will their front porch be their yard? Basically, we want students to realize that their front porch is the place where family and community come together and that music enriches this sense of community. That being said, playing music on the front porch is also a stage, and so if that is where these moments come together, we want to hear about it! Encourage the students to use descriptive language.
3. Finally, the third prompt will be for students to explain how they feel music encourages a sense of community and family, and to offer an example of a time in which they have had this feeling with family and/or friends.

### **Activity 2:**

Activity two has students design their version of a "Folk Den Project". Students should have a name specific to their project. This will include having the students design a media project in which they select 5 folk songs that are of particular significance to them. The students will upload (preserve) the songs, research the song, provide a brief history of it, and include the words to accompany the song. This could be a blog, or another form of a media project that your students have already studied are familiar with designing. If you wish, you may take this opportunity to introduce a new form of media project design. This project is also a way for students to express why they have selected their chosen folk songs. Why do they feel it is important to preserve these songs?

### **Activity 3:**

Have students listen to the song, "Turn, Turn, Turn", as performed by Roger McGuinn in this episode. Once the students have listened to this performance, have them listen to it again, to ensure that they really hear the message. Then, have a class discussion in which you explore, what is the message of this song? What were The Byrds expressing during the 1960's with this song? How does it apply to our world now? Then, as an artistic component to this plan, please have the students design an art project, using a medium of their choice, in which they express the message of this iconic song. This part of the lesson may extend into future class periods, and will likely require time outside of the classroom for completion. Options for the design of the art project may include photography, drawing, painting, or an artistic media design. If you want to continue to expand upon this project, students may present their work to the class if you think that would be a nice addition to the project. In this case, you may also design a rubric for the students to analyze

presentations, which may be a helpful exercise and offer good experience for the students as they move forward and become more and more acquainted with rubrics and guidelines.

**Connection to English Language Arts Standards:**

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text (in reference to song research for this lesson)
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas (song research)
- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone (song research)
- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words (in reference to the broadcast and other forms of research and work throughout the plan)
- Determine similarities of text (story, drama, poem) to media (audio, film, stage, multimedia)
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text (music in this lesson)
  - Analyze how meaning and tone are impacted by specific word choice (song and music)
  - Describe similarities of various media portrayals of subjects (texts, audio, video, multimedia) Describe differences of various media portrayals of subjects (texts, audio, video, multimedia) Analyze how the: audio, video, multimedia version of various text portrays the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words (lyrics to songs in this lesson)
  - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience (design of Folk Den)
  - Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions (design of their Folk Den)
- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text (music)
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in a different context, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening

**Connection to Music Standards:**

- Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with the visual arts (media project design of their Folk Den project)
- Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with music
- Students analyze their own and others' artistic products and performances using accepted standards
- The arts fulfill a variety of purposes in society (e.g., to present issues and ideas, to entertain, to teach or persuade, to design, plan and beautify)
- The arts have value and significance for daily life. They provide personal fulfillment, whether in career settings, avocational pursuits, or leisure
- The arts provide forms of nonverbal communication that can strengthen the presentation of ideas and emotions
- Compare and explain purposes for which music is created to fulfill (ceremonial, recreational)
- Describe and compare the characteristics and purposes of works of art representing various cultures, historical periods, artists, and/or style

- Identify characteristics of fiction and nonfiction and literary genres (folk literature, poetry, essays, plays, short stories, novels)

**Vocabulary Within Lesson:** Figurative Language, Literal Language, Banjo, Archives, Folk Music, Folk Art

When focusing on the vocabulary, please encourage students to listen to the words of the folk songs performed in this episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour. What words are literal and what are figurative? What is the difference? Also explore symbolism and the instances of it throughout the folk songs. Also under this area, you may want to talk more about the quote of John F. Kennedy that Michael Johnathon recites, that includes the idea that an artist looks at the world around them, their world, and their community; Art is a form of truth.

**Rubric & Guidelines:** This rubric is a guideline, and will need to be revised and updated to accompany each activity within the lesson.

Demonstrates an understanding of artistic and musical expression as demonstrated through Roger McGuinn’s folk song performances	Shows an enriched and strong understanding	Shows somewhat of an understanding of the episode but main points are not clear.	Does not seem to understand the connections the episode is portraying through music and artistic expression and the expression of folk music
Demonstrates an understanding of creatively creating their own media and art project	Understanding is strong of how the episode connects to creating their own projects	Demonstrates an understanding of musical and art expression demonstrated in the episode, but not entirely connecting it to creating their own media and art project	An understanding of the episode is not evident through the design of their media and art project
Projects are designed creatively and in a way that will demonstrate meaning while also following a particular style they have chosen.	Very well expressed	Needs additional guidance/lesson	Does not exhibit a strong understanding of the desired goal
Remains on Task While Designing Projects and In-Class Work	Most of the lesson	Needs additional guidance/redirection	Exhibits difficulty remaining on task throughout the lesson and In-Class Work