

WS22 COLLEGE Lesson Plan

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Title: SONGFARMERS: Building a Front Porch 'round the World

Subject: Music and Community

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

Introduction: This WoodSongs documentary speaks to the idea of creating our own front porch and what this means. Michael Johnathon shares the message of creating a front porch around the world. Meaning, creating a place where we all may gather to share in community; a place where we may join to share in music and good conversation. Creating our own front porch means to create a peaceful place to gather. Music is very powerful and brings people together. Visit SongFarmers.org

Goals/Objectives:

- **To understand the symbolism of creating our own front porch.**
- **To understand the way that music builds community and brings people together.**
- **To understand presenting an idea in various ways, including music, art, and written expression.**
- **To understand the art of Appalachian storytelling**
- **To learn the elements of ballad writing**

Course Activities:

Activity 1: Begin by introducing the topic of creating a sense of community. Present students with a fundamental question such as, "Explain the way that music creates community and brings people together. How could we encourage this to work for peace in our communities?" Allow students a few minutes to reflect and write their response.

Then, watch the SongFarmers documentary. This will likely carry over into the second class session, and if so, take time to review before continuing the documentary.

SongFarmers.org/TV

After watching the documentary, revisit the fundamental question you asked at the beginning of the lesson. This time, have students include the idea of creating a front porch around the world.

Activity 2: Reserve library or computer lab time in which students have time to research. This project will have them write their own ballad to demonstrate the idea of music creating a sense of community and togetherness. Encourage students to think about the art of Appalachian storytelling.

The ballad-writing assignment is designed to educate the student, and others, about the art of Appalachian storytelling, while also encouraging an appreciation of it. Students will design the project with the intention of inspiring others to create their own Appalachian music or art (their own front porch).

In addition, another objective is for students to relay the history of Appalachia through story-telling (the ballad).

Objective: Students will develop an understanding of the history of Appalachian music and storytelling. This will allow students to learn about history and culture, and also to apply knowledge and creativity to create their own ballad. The topic should focus on an issue or topic that is connected to creating togetherness through music (the front porch).

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>)

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
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- 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.
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Activity 3: (optional) Have students share their ballads in class. Create a front porch feeling in which students share their ballads and music is also played. Really emphasize the warm feeling that sharing and creating this idea of a front porch evokes.