

American Folk Music Unit Plan

Teacher's name: _____

Grade/class: 5th / 6th Grade

Subject: General Music

Date of plan: November 9, 2014

Date of implementation: January 1, 2015

Name of Unit: American Folk Music

Unit Description: Students will learn several American Folk Songs. The unit will include singing, playing, listening, moving and composition activities with traditional American Folk music as the medium.

Introduction to the Unit: Describe your work: Why did you choose this topic? List Resources

There is a considerable universe of material available in the American Folk music tradition from which to choose to study multiple components of music learning. Many songs available are already familiar to children, and there are good opportunities to present 'new' material in the same styles to those familiar songs.

Resources include *The Kodaly Center – The American Folk Song Collection* available at <http://kodaly.hnu.edu/>, *Songs For Teaching* at <http://www.songsforteaching.com/folk/>, American Folklore at <http://www.songsforteaching.com/folk/>, *Music in Childhood* by Campbell & Scott-Kassner(2014, 2010, 2006), and others.

List Focus Question(s) Why are these important?

- What is folk music? What makes a song particularly American Folk Music?
- What methods are best for learning to sing new songs?
- How can thoughtful response to music be elicited from students?
- How can simple songs be made more interesting through singing techniques (rounds) and instrumental accompaniments?
- What makes a good accompaniment?

Connections for kids: How will this topic engage them, connect to their interests and sustain, develop & expand their knowledge?

Music of the American Folk heritage is part of the culture and many children are exposed to some of the songs from a very young age. However, many of the songs have topics that feel exotic because they are from a different era with 'culturally nostalgic' subject matter. Students will be engaged in focused activities.

Goals and Objectives (Know and Do)

Unit Plan Template

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn what folk music is and what is particularly American Folk Music • Sing a melody and sing in a round • Use solfege • Move in rhythm • Analyze and compare music • Respond to music and communicate response (not necessarily verbally) • Play instruments • Compose accompaniments 	
Number of lessons and overall length (length of lessons, total minutes)	
4-8 lessons – 30 minutes each	
Materials and Resources needed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guitar • Recordings of selections • Computer and internet access • Projector • White board and Markers • Printed lyrics to song(s) • Paper and pencils • Recorders, xylophones, non-pitched percussion instruments (shakers; maracas) 	
Name and Description of each lesson	Standards addressed in each lesson
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to American Folk Music; sing, move, use body percussion, revisit/learn and practice solfege on a song; 2. Listen and compare different folk songs; analyze and evaluate songs; creative response through movement and / or visual arts 3. Sing a song and play (split the class) accompaniment on recorders, xylophones, drums, shakers; practice reading notation; 4. compose accompaniments to a song 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Singing Understanding relationship to other disciplines 2. Listening, analyzing, describing music 3. Performing on instruments Reading music notation 4. Compose accompaniments
Prior knowledge	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to Solfege • Some knowledge of reading music notation • Some prior use of pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments 	
Introduction and “hook”/Closure	

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- The first lesson will start with the singing of a well-known American Folk song, such as “Take Me Out To The Ballgame.” A discussion on folk music will follow (What is it? Where does it come from? Who composes it?).
- Closure: The class will perform an American folk song to be recorded for their portfolios; a performance for other students or parents may be arranged.

Assessment plan: How will learning be assessed? What types of activities will be used for formative, summative, self assessments?

- Singing: observe accuracy of pitch and rhythm.
- Solfege: observe for accuracy.
- Children can be asked to sing / perform solfege individually or in small groups if needed.
- Observation of students’ engagement in discussion. Do they understand the genre of music?
- Students’ oral and written, drawn or performed analysis and response to music will be observed for quality of expression.
- Playing instruments – use a rubric to evaluate individual student performances and notation reading.
- Recording of final performance for students’ will be a summative assessment of the performance in a group setting.
- Evaluate accompaniment according to how closely the student followed criteria provided beforehand.

How will the assessments be used to change the content and structure of the unit?

- Modifications to the length of time spent in instruction will be made as needed. In addition, the content (meaning song selections) of future lessons may be changed if the material is not well received and students are not engaged.
- Changes in my delivery in terms of pace, demeanor (make sure I am keeping it upbeat).
- Reduce ‘down time’ if too much is occurring.

What other techniques and methods will be used to assess the effectiveness of the unit?

Observe how much students are engaged in the activities and participating. What is the quality of the singing, playing, composing? Are all of the students contributing?

Direct feedback from the students.

How will you set up the classroom environment to enhance the learning and maintain positive, safe interactions?

Unit Plan Template

- Uncluttered environment; organization of instruments; adequate space for movement activities;
- Posters and artwork depicting American folk / tradition themes and music themes.
- Procedures for activities clearly posted.
- Scales / solfege posters displayed.

How will you adapt this unit for particular groups of students? How will you offer differentiation, personalization and/or individualization?

- Students having trouble will be given one-on-one assistance. Songs will be taught very slowly – only one verse will likely be used.
- Advanced opportunities can be in the form of allowing students with proficiency on an instruments (such as guitar) to use it in the performance and composition activities.
- The unit could be expanded to include other activities and components if the students are particularly engaged with the genre.

Other information...

The song(s) performed may be a choice made by the students after listening activities. The goal would be to get student to take ownership of the music they wish to sing and play.