

Give Peace A Chance: Analyzing Music for Peace

PURPOSE

To analyze songs in order to understand the way technical elements, mood and meaning work together as a cohesive whole in a piece of music.

GRADE LEVELS

Upper Middle and High School

CONTENT AREAS

Fine Arts (Music)
Social Studies

TIME

45-70 minutes or
One class period

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Students will define music vocabulary.
- Students will listen to and analyze musical selections for a particular purpose.

STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

Fine Arts State Goal 25A, 25B, 26A, 26B, 27B
Social Sciences State Goals 16B, 16D, 18A

LEARNING STYLES

Musical/Rhythmic
Bodily/Kinesthetic
Interpersonal
Intrapersonal

MATERIALS

Peace and Art for Change PowerPoint Presentation (Music Version)
Song Analysis Worksheet

VOCABULARY

Genre	Timbre
Composition	Pitch
Tempo	Mood

ASSESSMENT

Peace Song Analysis

ACTIVITIES

Anticipatory Set

- On large sheets of paper, place the names of different musical genres around the classroom: pop, R&B, rap, country, classical, folk, gospel, etc.
- Tell students that today's lesson will help them learn to use the tools of music analysis on song selections. Give students 5 minutes to move around the room to the genres writing their comments or observations on sticky notes, which they will stick to the wall near the work of art. They may also wish to comment on one of the sticky notes left by a classmate for a particular work of art. Prompt them with questions like:
 - Which artists or songs come to mind in this genre?
 - What subject matter do you associate with this genre?
 - What kinds of sounds, voices, or instruments often occur in this genre?
 - What types of mood or feelings do you associate with the genre?

- What types of audiences usually enjoy this genre?
- The teacher should also move about the room reading the comments. When students are finished, ask them to share any particularly interesting comments they read, agreed with, or disagreed with and discuss. It may be helpful for the teacher to start this process off with his/her own comment.
- After about 5 minutes of discussion, tell students that they are going to learn the tools of music analysis, apply it, and then create their own work of music as an assignment.

Lesson:

Define (or review) the following terms:

- **Genre: a specific type or category of music (jazz, choral, protest song, etc.)**
- **Composition: a single, complete piece of music**
- **Tempo: the speed or pace of the beat in a piece of music, may speed up or slow down**
- **Timbre: the tone color or relative brightness or darkness of a sound**
- **Pitch: the highness or lowness of sounds or notes in a song**
- **Mood: the feeling or emotions of a piece of music's sounds and lyrics**

Tell students that they will be using these terms to analyze peace songs from the Vietnam era.

- In order to gain the background knowledge necessary to properly interpret the songs, tell students they will first learn a bit about the Vietnam war and counterculture movement that produced this music.
 - Display the **Peace and Art for Change PowerPoint Presentation (Music Version)** and go through it as a class. Teachers should first print out a Notes version of the PowerPoint to access the information for each slide to be shared with the class.
 - When you get through the information slides, pause at the first lyrics slide (“**I was only 19**”) and distribute the **Song Analysis Worksheet**. **Tell students to refer to the sheet as the teacher completes the example, but NOT to write on it because they will be completing the worksheet independently with a different song.**
 - Put up the slide of the lyrics for “I was only 19” by Redgum. Play the song. You can access a recording accompanied with images on [YouTube](#).
 - After listening to the song once, share with students the notes from the PowerPoint slides about the song's meaning. Then revisit the song and demonstrate completion of the **Song Analysis Worksheet** verbally as students follow along without writing on their sheets. The purpose of this is to model the sort of thinking you expect from students on their own assignments and demonstrate use of the vocabulary terms in context.

Debrief/Assessment:

- Tell students that for homework, they will need to choose a peace or protest song on their own in order to complete the **Song Analysis Worksheet**.
- Put up the final slide on the PowerPoint and briefly describe suggestions for song choices. Students may choose one of these or select another song to be approved by the teacher.
- Allow students a few nights to complete the assignment since they will have to find and listen to the audio. Alternatively, you could set aside time in a computer lab or set up listening stations with select songs during class time.

Suggestions for Extension Activities:

1. Coordinate with an art class to explore peace-themed works and work with a computer or technology teacher to create an audio-visual presentation of the artwork along with songs performed or written by the music class.
2. Have students create their own peace-themed music on the topic of gun violence. This could be turned in as poetry entries in our **Student Voices Contest!**