

Musical Time Periods: *The Modern Period*

Art

Strand 1 Concept 4 PO 301: Demonstrate purposeful use of subject matter, symbols, and/or themes in his or her own artwork.

Strand 2 Concept 1 PO 305: Make connections between art and other curricular areas; PO 306: Discuss how artworks reflect ideas, images, and symbols from the culture within which they were made.

Writing

Strand 1 Concept 1 PO 4 (Grade 5)/PO 5 (Grade 6-8): Use organization strategies to plan writing.

Music

Strand 1 Concept 2 PO 2 (Grade 4): Playing a short melody using appropriate dynamics.

Strand 2 Concept 1 PO 1 (Grade 6-7): Explaining the connection between music and other art forms;

PO 2 (Grade 6-7): Describing an effect an instrument's physical properties will have upon its sound;

PO 3: Comparing in two or more arts how the basic elements of each art can be used to express similar events, emotions, scenes, or ideas.

Strand 2 Concept 2 PO 3 (Grade 4-5): Identifying/describing the origins and development of instruments.

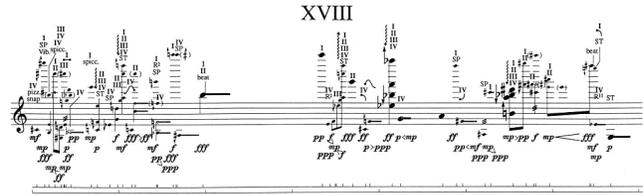
Strand 2 Concept 3 PO 1 (Grade 6-8): Explaining personal reactions to musical experiences, describing various ways that music conveys thought, emotion, and universal themes without the use of words.

Science

Strand 1 Concept 1: Make predictions; Concept 2: Participate in planning and conducting investigations and recording data/design and conduct controlled investigations.

Strand 3 Concept 2 (K-4): Understand the impact of technology.

The Modern Period (C.1900-present)



No musical time period has seen, nor continues to see, so much change and innovation than the Modern period. Around 1900, it was no longer acceptable to place such high value on beauty in art and music; the true value in the Modern period was and still is placed on originality and innovation. Trained and non-trained musicians re-examined their assumptions of what music truly is. New approaches to music-creation emerged at a rapid pace, from popular jazz to electronic music to complete silence. For this reason, the best word to characterize the still-evolving era of modern music is *variety*.

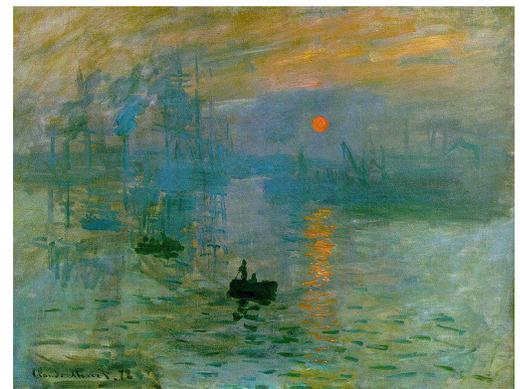


Around 9 million people came to America from other countries in the early 20th century.

Major transitions in music styles have followed large movements in culture or economy, or major events that shake up a nation or nations. By 1900, the population of the world had grown immensely, and culture had spread far and wide, thanks to the Enlightenment. For the first time, America (barely 150 years old at this point) became a world power, joining ranks with Great Britain, France, and Germany, among others. Immigrants from other nations came to America for better opportunities for success. Americans and foreigners transitioned from rural areas to urban cities to be close to the convenience and progress of the cities. Industry also saw significant development: the inventions of the car, airplane, movies, and

electricity helped form a culture where individuality was becoming the norm. Even more, psychologists observed human emotions and responses to certain triggers differently than in the Romantic-Enlightenment viewpoint, noting that people are actually controlled by and act on their *mental processes* without being fully aware that they are doing so, instead of responding to their *emotions* in different ways.

In the Modern period, people all over the world explored alternative ways to create, play, think about, discuss, and even to define music, as a response to the changing world around them. Musicians did not want to add onto what already existed, as they did in earlier musical periods, but rather to invent entirely new music genres. As a result, artists' individualistic approach to music was essentially the same, but resulted in very



Expressionist art (left) focused on conveying specific emotions, while impressionist art (right) sought to portray an image or scene that was dreamy and imaginative.

different music. In Europe, Impressionist and Expressionist musicians rejected the excess and deep emotion of the Romantic period by writing music that was very light and not weighed down (impressionist), or that addressed an emotion itself instead of an event that evoked an emotion (expressionist). At the same time in America, styles of music that represented the working class were widely popular. Jazz, ragtime, musicals, and others gave different groups a sense of identity and created a diverse national culture.

Key Composers of the Modern Period

Claude Debussy – impressionism
Johannes Brahms - neoclassicism
John Cage – avant-garde
Arnold Schoenberg – serialism (12-tone)
Steve Reich - minimalism

Toward the middle of the 20th century, several global events deeply impacted people across every nation: World War 1, a global depression, and an even more devastating Second World War transformed lives and forced artists to respond. Many artistic movements grew out of musicians' reactions to the horror of the world's circumstances. While some musicians wanted to remind themselves of the comfort of pre-war times through Neo-classical music (new music written in the old, Classical style), many musicians completely rejected the old ways of defining and experiencing music. They invented new instruments (in a movement called Dadaism), new sounds and ways to produce sounds on familiar instruments (the avant-garde movement), and

new ways to organize notes (serialism). Other composers removed emotion and inspiration from music altogether: minimalists used repetition and combinations of pure instrument sounds to create a hypnotic and meditative effect, some composers used chance operations (such as rolling a die or flipping coins) to make decisions about aspects of their music, and others created music using entirely electronic sounds, typically with a computer or electronic instrument.

A composer named John Cage is particularly famous for challenging people's idea of how to define music. He was fascinated with sounds produced by any and all objects, whether or not they were called "instruments". He created new sounds, such as by placing screws, wood, and pieces of rubber in the strings of a piano, for example. In 1952, Cage famously wrote a piece called 4'33" ("Four Minutes and Thirty-three Seconds"), in which a musician sits at a piano, opens and closes the piano lid, but does not play a single note. Cage's intent, not only in 4'33" but in his entire life, was to help people notice and experience the beauty in the world of sound that surrounds them every moment of their lives.



John Cage placed different small objects between the strings of a piano to change its sound.

The Modern period is exciting to explore because we are living in it. The technology and industry that facilitated much of the music of this period are still major influences on our lives, and continue to change daily. We have ultimate freedom to participate in music-making and self-expression in any way that we can come up with. It is amazing to see the journey music has taken from the first sounds an aboriginal man created on a self-made flute, to a piece written for organ in the 1980s that will take 639 years to perform, to music that is still waiting to be discovered!

Lesson Plan 1: Modern Period – Impressionism

Grade Level: 4-8

Ideal classroom: Music, but if instruments can be obtained, any general classroom

Subject areas: Art, Writing, Music

Standards:

Art:

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Strand 2 Concept 3 PO 1 (Grade 6-8): Explaining personal reactions to musical experiences, describing various ways that music conveys thought, emotion, and universal themes without the use of words.

Materials:

-PBS film “The French Impressionists” [click here](#) to view.

-Impressionism: Art vs. Music Venn diagram (see attachment #1)

-Pencils

-Magazines/scissors

-Impressionist musical selections

-Piano/other instruments to demonstrate Impressionist techniques

-Impressionism Quiz Game (see attachment #2)

*optional: ribbon sticks for movement

Objective:

Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of impressionist style.

Students will be able to compare and contrast impressionist music and art.

Procedure:

1. Explain to students, *Today [or over the next few classes] we’re taking a trip to France! In the early part of the Modern period of music, both artists and musicians in France wanted to branch away from the excessive, emotional approach to the arts in the Romantic era. They were interested in a lighter, freer, and more imaginative way of expressing themselves. First, we’ll take a look at impressionist art in order to better understand impressionist music.*
2. Distribute Venn diagrams (see attachment). Show PBS film “The French Impressionists”. Have students verbally identify general characteristics of the paintings (kinds of subjects, background, use of color, stroke, focus), as well as similarities/differences among the paintings. Ask students to write these characteristics/similarities/differences in the LEFT circle on their Venn diagram, labeling the circle “art”.
3. Form students into groups and pass out magazines to the groups, have students choose one picture of a person, scene, event, etc. While students are selecting pictures, pass out paper and crayons. After students have selected a picture, review basic characteristics of impressionism in art, and have students draw an “impressionist version” of the picture they selected. Encourage them to make the picture look as dreamy as possible. While students are selecting and drawing their picture, play a selection or selections of impressionist music (Debussy, Ravel, Satie).
4. After the students complete their pictures, ask what they noticed about the music that was playing.
5. Play the recording again, ask students to identify characteristics of the music they heard. How does it make them feel? What scenes or images do they picture while they are listening to the music? Ask students to jot down their ideas on the RIGHT side of the Venn diagram, labeling the circle “music”.
6. Explain and perform some techniques of impressionist music on piano or another instrument: whole tone scale, pentatonic scale, ambiguous melody, complex chords, parallel motion, peaceful, transparent, light textures (no Romantic storminess), flute, glockenspiel, and cymbals (and others) to provide effect.
7. Invite students to play some of the techniques/instruments.
8. Split students into groups of four/five, and distribute Impressionism Quiz Game (see attachment)

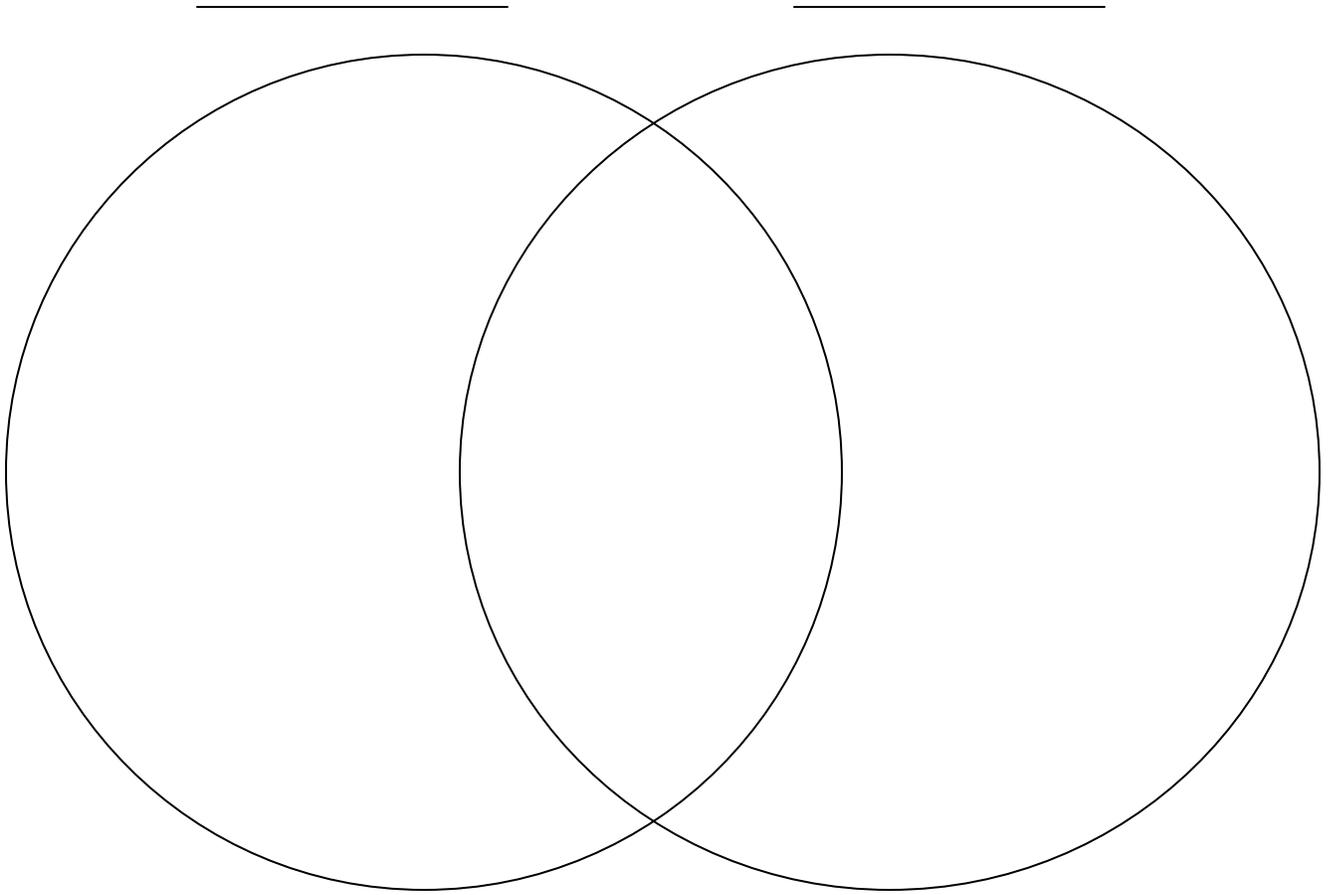
Optional additional activity (prior to quiz): Have students create movement with ribbon sticks to accompany certain features of impressionist music, i.e. one movement for each time they hear a scale, the flute, a melody, etc.

Assessment:

Students will demonstrate understanding of impressionist art by creating an “impression” of a photograph from a magazine and by taking a quiz.

Students will compare and contrast impressionist music and art using a Venn diagram.

Impressionism



Impressionism Quiz Game

Write "I" for *Impressionism* or "O" for *other* to identify each piece of music played. Good luck!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

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9. _____
10. _____

Lesson Plan 2: Modern Period – Investigating Instruments

Grade Level: 2-8

Ideal Classroom: General/Science

Subject areas: Science, Music

Standards:

Science:

Strand 1 Concept 1: Make predictions; Concept 2: Participate in planning and conducting investigations and recording data/design and conduct controlled investigations

Strand 3 Concept 2 (K-4): Understand the impact of technology

Music:

Strand 2 Concept 1 PO 1 (Grade 6): Identifying/describing ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines are related to music; PO 2 (Grade 6-7): Describing an effect an instrument's physical properties will have upon its sound.

Strand 2 Concept 2 PO 3 (Grade 4-5): Identifying/describing the origins and development of instruments

Materials:

Computers

Brass instrument info worksheet (see attachment #1)

Pre-cut garden hoses of varying lengths (ex. 6", 9", 12", 15", 18", 21", 24")

Brass instrument mouthpieces (typically available at any local music store for rent or purchase, or from a school's band program)

Funnels

Sanitizer/instrument cleaner (available at any local music store)

Brass Instrument Data worksheet (see attachment #2)

Objective:

Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the history and makeup of brass instruments

Students will be able to demonstrate fundamental knowledge of how brass instruments work.

Procedure:

1. Read Smokestacks and Spinning Jennys: Industrial Revolution to students. Discuss with them how machines, such as ones invented in the early 1900s, changed people's lives for better or for worse.
2. Discuss with students how instruments were updated and mass-produced because of advancements in machines, factories, and industrialization in the early Modern period.
3. Have students work in pairs (one researcher, one note-taker) to explore:
[click here](#) (once there, click on "Modern Period." Tell students it will be helpful to use the "seating chart" at the top of the page). Have the pairs write down information they obtain regarding brass instruments, using the Brass instrument info worksheet (see attachment #1). **while students are doing their research, you can set up the pitch-testing activity. Put out the Length/Pitch charts for each group member at each group station.
4. If there is time, students may share information about their instrument (you can divide the class into groups of the same instrument, and have one member of each large group share one piece of information they learned about the instrument).
5. Bring students into a large group and explain that they will be acting as Modern-period instrument improvers today. They will experiment by testing different lengths of hose to determine each one's pitch. They will then write down their results, and will then listen to excerpts of each brass instrument to determine which hose length sounds closest to each instrument.
6. Demonstrate to students that they will place the funnel and mouthpiece on opposite ends of the tubing, and buzz into the mouthpiece to make a sound out of their "instrument." Have students practice buzzing high and low sounds, and ask them what they need to do to their lips/mouth to get a high or low buzz sound.
7. Depending on the class size and dynamic, assign the same groups as in the research part of the lesson, or assign new groups of 3-5 members.
8. Have students perform the experiment, and write their findings on the Instrument Data worksheet.

Assessment:

Students will demonstrate knowledge of brass instruments by researching one instrument and presenting their findings to their classmates.

Students will demonstrate understanding of the fundamental acoustics of brass instruments by testing the sound production of tubing of varying lengths, and by recording their results.

Brass Instrument Information Sheet

Group Members: _____

Choose one group member to be the researcher, and another to be the note-taker. Select one brass instrument from the orchestra of the Modern Period, and fill in information you gather about that instrument.

1. Our brass instrument is the (check one):

Trumpet Trombone

French Horn Tuba

2. It originated (its "Rookie Season") in the:

early 1700s mid 1700s

late 1700s late 1800s

3. Some famous people who play this instrument are: _____

4. Two interesting facts about our instrument are:

1. _____

2. _____

5. Here is a drawing of our instrument (do your best!):



Brass Instrument Data

Group Members: _____

1. Question: How does the length of the tubes of a brass instrument determine its pitch?

2. Hypothesis:

3. Predictions:

4. Data (do not fill in the **Instrument Similarity** column until the end of the experiment):

Hose Length	Pitch Rating	Instrument Similarity
6"		
9"		
12"		
15"		
18"		
21"		
24"		

5. Analysis and Conclusion:

6. Which tubes sound most like the instruments in the modern orchestra? For each length, write the instrument it resembles in the **Instrument Similarity** column.