

# **Musical Time Periods: The Classical Period**

## **Music**

Strand 1 Concept 4 PO 1 (Grades 7-8): Creating/arranging short songs and/or instrumental pieces in the treble clef within specified guidelines.

Strand 2 Concept 1 PO 1 (Grades 7-8): Identifying/describing/explaining connections between music and other disciplines/art forms.

Strand 3 Concept 1 PO 3 (Grades 1-3): Recognizing patterns/AB & ABA forms/rounds.

Strand 3 Concept 2 PO 1 (Grades K-3): Expressing personal reactions to a music performance through words/drawings.

## **Art**

Strand 1 Concept 4 PO 101: Select and use subject matter and/or symbols in his or her own artwork

## **Nature (Science)**

Strand 4 Concept 3 PO 1 (Grade K-1): Identify some plants and animals that exist in the local environment.

Strand 5 concept 1 PO 1 (Grade K-2): Identify/classify/describe objects based on their properties; PO 2 (Grade K): compare objects by their observable properties.

## **Astronomy (Science)**

Strand 2 Concept 1 PO 1: Identify how diverse people and/or cultures, past and present, have made important contributions to scientific innovations.

Strand 6 Concept 3 PO 5 (Grades 5, 7): Explain/Identify motion of the sun and stars/major constellations.

## The Classical Period (C.1730-1815 AD)



The Classical Period in music is a very broad name for many different kinds of music in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but it generally includes any kind of music in a style that opposed the practices of the previous Baroque period. As with almost any of the musical eras, the Classical Period followed a major social movement that took place in Europe in the early 1700s called The Enlightenment. This movement featured new discoveries and approaches in science, culture, reason, physiology, and the well-being of mankind. New scientific approaches spread to the way people thought about politics, social relations, and the emotions. Throughout the Baroque era, scholars

### Key Composers of the Classical Period

Johann Sebastian Bach – choral &  
instrumental music

Georg Frederich Handel – opera &  
cantatas

Franz Joseph Haydn – symphonies

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – opera &  
piano music

believed that the emotions, or the “affections”, were controlled by events that caused a person to stay in one emotion (anger, sadness, or excitement, for example) until a different event triggered a different emotion. In the Enlightenment, however, scientists discovered, through new observations of blood circulation and the nervous system, that humans have a wide range of emotions and that those emotions can change quickly. This discovery powerfully affected the way artists wrote and performed music from around the 1700s onward.

Another major idea discussed in the Enlightenment was the accessibility of culture throughout the world. Improvements in agriculture increased the population and size of European cities, so the urban middle class grew, causing the separate high, middle, and low classes to become more balanced. As a result, high-class music and art became more accessible to people of the middle and lower classes. Cities like Vienna, Austria became centers for people who wanted to discuss and take part in this new and diverse arts culture. In addition, marriages among rulers of different countries, such as a German princess marrying a Russian emperor, caused their paid artists to travel with them, so the artists adopted a variety of styles in their travels. As a result, philosophers were inspired to promote the welfare of mankind, education, social equality, and equal access



Vienna, Austria, as depicted in 1758, was a center for high-class arts culture.

to the arts. One musician declared that the best kind of music blended many different styles and practices. The number of amateur (non-professional) musicians grew immensely during the Enlightenment, and public concerts were a popular way to perform music for enjoyment, and for the performance hall to make money.



Making music at home was a popular pastime in the classical era.

The new public interest in music, art, and culture caused a shift in people's preference from Baroque to a new "classical" style that reminded people of classic Greek and Roman literature and art. Also inspired by the improvements in science and culture, people began to enjoy music that was much simpler, clearer, and more satisfying. In the Classical Period, people essentially rejected the complexity, deep emotion, and excessiveness of the Baroque period. One way that musicians rejected these characteristics is in the way they treated the lower-sounding parts, especially in instrumental music. Instead of simply playing chords, or several notes at the same time, they put the notes in repeating rhythmic patterns as the accompaniment part. This method was known as Alberti bass, named after its creator. Some other features of the Classical music of the 1700s and 1800s were fast but light rhythms, shorter musical ideas (called phrases) that were repeated and grouped in simple forms, and song-like melodies.

As more people became interested in this new and easily-satisfying music, public performances of all kinds increased. Some of the most popular music to write was chamber pieces (small groups of similar or mixed instruments), symphonies (large groups with many different instruments), opera (long, dramatic works with singing, acting, and costumes), and sacred music (music written for church settings), which was still in the Baroque style. Opera remained the most popular genre to write for and to see for several centuries. Two kinds of opera existed throughout Europe: opera seria (OP-er-a ZEH-ri-a), or serious opera, and opera buffa (OP-er-a BOO-fah), or comedic opera. These separate genres demonstrated the people's interest in capturing the mixed emotions in the human life.

Musicians also began to develop identities, somewhat like modern-day celebrities. They relied even more on the support of the public in order to achieve popularity and an income. Some of the most prominent musician-composers of the Classical era were Franz Josef Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Though Haydn was much older than Mozart, the two composers were friends and admired each other's work. Haydn was famous for writing 104 symphonies as well as many other works. Mozart was known for being a child prodigy, and for his ability to write music incredibly quickly that also was also beautiful and blended many different styles.

W. A. Mozart was one of the most famous and talented composers both during the classical period as well as in all of music history.



## Lesson Plan 1: Classical Period – Observing Different Patterns

Grade Level: K-3

Ideal classroom: Music, but any general classroom will also work

Subject areas: Music, Art, Nature (Science)

### **Standards:**

#### Music:

Strand 3 Concept 1 PO 3 (Grades 1-3): Recognizing patterns/AB & ABA forms/rounds.

Strand 3 Concept 2 PO 1 (Grades K-3): Expressing personal reactions to a music performance through words/drawings.

#### Art:

Strand 1 Concept 4 PO 101: Select and use subject matter and/or symbols in his or her own artwork.

#### Nature (Science):

Strand 4 Concept 3 PO 1 (Grade K-1): Identify some plants and animals that exist in the local environment.

Strand 5 concept 1 PO 1 (Grade K-2): Identify/classify/describe objects based on their properties; PO 2 (Grade K): compare objects by their observable properties.

### **Materials:**

#### Part I

-Two sets of objects of different color/composition (blocks, pens, fabric, coins, etc) for each student or small groups

\*\*see variation for higher grade levels

-Two sheets of paper, one printed on a colored sheet of paper with the letter “A”, the other printed on a different color paper with the letter “B”

#### Part II

-Blank sheets of paper for each student

-markers/crayons/colored pencils (coloring implement)

#### Part III

-musical instruments

### **Objective:**

Students will be able to discern the difference between two (or more) different groups of physical material.

Students will be able to discern the difference between two differing sections of musical material from the Classical Period of music.

### **Procedure:**

#### Part I

1. Mix colored objects together (i.e. red blocks and blue blocks) in separate areas for individual students or small groups. The complexity of the objects can be varied according to the grade level.

2. Have students organize the objects into two groups.

3. Ask students to describe how they divided the objects into two groups.

**\*\*Variation: For higher grade levels, i.e. 3-4, have students organize materials into **three groups: two identical and one different (ABA), or three different groups entirely (ABC form)****

4. Have two (three) students come to one of the object-group setups. Have each student hold up a sign with “A” or “B” (Variation: another letter according to which form you want to discuss). Explain to students that when something can be organized into two groups, or patterns, we can label those groups/patterns “A” and “B” to organize them.

5. Ask students to describe where they have seen patterns before (ex. clothing, crosswalk). Have students describe how they know these items have patterns.

#### Part II

1. Give students blank sheets of paper and markers/crayons/colored pencils

2. Tell students you will play a piece of music from the Classical Period (choose a recording that has very clear A and B sections, such as Haydn or Mozart). Tell students how many sections there are (according to the grade level). Have students draw a picture that they believe represents the music. When they think the music changes, have them draw a different picture with a different color.
3. Play recording a second time, asking students to pay careful attention to things that made them notice a change in the music. Have them enhance their drawings during the second listen.
4. Ask students to share what they illustrated and how they knew when to draw something different.
5. Explain to students that the separate sections they heard are called “form” in musical terms. This particular piece featured “ABA” form (or whichever form you choose to use).

### Part III

1. Provide students with two different simple rhythmic patterns. Have them clap each pattern.
2. Split the class into two groups (A and B). Have each group clap their assigned pattern, creating a form (AB, ABA, ABB, etc.)
3. Have students move to percussion instruments (or any available instruments). Depending on the class, either have students create a melody for each rhythm, or create your own melody for each rhythm.
4. Have students play each melody in the form desired.
5. Discuss with students how each melody was different from the other.

### **Assessment:**

Part I: The students will identify patterns they have observed in everyday life.

Part II: The students will demonstrate rudimentary understanding of patterns and form in music by drawing varying pictures.

Part III: The students will demonstrate understanding of patterns and form in music by performing simple rhythmic and melodic patterns using body percussion and percussion instruments.

## Lesson Plan 2: Classical Period – Star Songs

Ideal classroom: Music classroom, but need computers/access to computer lab

Grade Level: 5-12

Subject areas: Astronomy, Music

### **Standards:**

#### Astronomy:

Strand 2 Concept 1 PO 1: Identify how diverse people and/or cultures, past and present, have made important contributions to scientific innovations.

Strand 6 Concept 3 PO 5 (Grades 5, 7): Explain/Identify motion of the sun and stars/major constellations

#### Music:

Strand 1 Concept 4 PO 1 (Grades 7-8): Creating/arranging short songs and/or instrumental pieces in the treble clef within specified guidelines

Strand 2 Concept 1 PO 1 (Grades 7-8): Identifying/describing/explaining connections between music and other disciplines/art forms

### **Materials:**

Computer to play Haydn's "Surprise Symphony" (No. 94) [click here](#) to view

Computer Lab

Various small ethereal-sounding instruments, such as a glockenspiel/soprano metallophone, wind chimes, rain stick, shaker, etc.

Piano or guitar to use as accompaniment

### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of Classical-era conventions.

Students will be able to compose a short song based on information about a star.

### **Procedure:**

1. Explain to students, *today we will combine two different subjects that had major advancements and developments in the 1700s and early 1800s. In music, this time was called the Classical period, which we'll talk more about in a moment, but in education and philosophy, this time was called the Enlightenment. People challenged all of the past theories and ideas in science, medicine, physics, government, religion, and more.*
2. Ask students, *what do you know of Galileo?* They should arrive at answers such as:
  - a. He was an astronomer
  - b. He improved the telescope
  - c. Father of astronomy
  - d. Observed Venus, Jupiter, sunspots
3. *Coincidentally, Galileo's father was a performer, composer, and music theorist. Just like in the academic areas, music during the Enlightenment period endured a transformation as well. Before the Classical era, music was described as "Baroque," which meant "excessive, rich, emotional"...basically like chocolate cake. Classical, on the other hand, as a rejection of the Baroque style, was more like fruit salad: it was lighter, clearer, and more varied, but with definite and discernable structure. One of the primary features of Classical-era music, especially in the early part of the period, was repeated, singable musical phrases.*
  - a. Sing the theme from Haydn's "Surprise Symphony" (No. 94), 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement; use solfège hand symbols. Have students sing back phrase by phrase with hand symbols.
  - a. Play Haydn's Symphony No. 94, 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement for students.
4. Have students take a short quiz on Baroque vs. Classical music (you can use selections of music that you may have discussed prior to this lesson; see attachment for quiz template).
4. Assign students in pairs. Using a computer lab, have students choose a star from here [this website](#). Have them take notes on their star. Have students write a short phrase containing brief information about their star, using no more than 8 syllables.

ex: Star: Lupus; phrase: "Ly-a-con, he an-gered Zeus"
5. Ask students, then, to try to rearrange their phrase in as many ways as they can. When they're finished, have them pick their favorite or best four, and arrange them in any order they want. If they have less than four, have them choose some they would like to repeat, so that they have four total phrases. Have them practice reciting them in order as a group.
6. Have students choose one musical instrument to enhance their performance (such as wind chimes, glock tinkling, rainstick, shakers, any instrument that gives an ethereal sound). Have them decide when they're going

to play the sound – think about when would be an effective time to enhance their words with musical sounds (very beginning, end, throughout...)

7. Have students perform in class. Explain to them that, just like the classical composers, they have essentially composed a “classical piece” that was simple and repetitive, yet enjoyable for the audience. If possible, you can play a simple comping pattern on piano to even further enhance the performance, or even a variation of the theme from Haydn’s Symphony No. 94, 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement.

**Assessment:**

Students will respond-sing the melody to Haydn’s “Surprise” Symphony (No. 94), 2<sup>nd</sup> Movement, and will take a quiz comparing Baroque- and Classical-era music.

Students will compose a four-phrase song including instrumental accompaniment based on information they obtain about a specific star.

## Classical vs. Baroque Quiz

Write "C" for *Classical* or "B" for *Baroque* to identify each piece of music played. Good luck!

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

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