



## What's in a Song?

### A teaching strategy for use with the *Virtual Gramophone* website

In this activity, students listen to several selections from the *Virtual Gramophone* website, practicing skills with beat, rhythm and pitch. Students express their reaction to a chosen piece in writing, in a two-dimensional work of art, and in dance.

#### Subject/Age

Music and Language Arts; Ages 7-9

#### Learning Outcomes (WCP) Objectives (QC) Learning Outcomes (APEF) Expectations (ON)

#### Fine Arts Outcomes (Music):

On completing this activity, students will:

- Distinguish beat and rhythm
- Use their bodies (arm movements) to create patterned movement to familiar music
- Express their response to music from different time periods

#### Fine Arts Outcomes (Visual Arts):

- Produce two-dimensional works of art that communicate ideas for specific purposes and to specific audiences

#### Language Arts Outcomes:

##### W (Writing):

- Write materials that show a growing ability to express their points of view and reflect on their own experiences

##### O/V (Oral and Visual Communication):

- Contribute and work constructively in groups

#### These Language Arts Outcomes correspond to:

- WPC GO - **W**: 1.1; **O/V**: 5.1
- Quebec objectives - 2 (**Writing**); 2 (**Oral**)
- APEF GCO - **W**: 8.1; **O/V**: 2

#### Student Demonstration of Learning

Students will listen to several selections from the *Virtual Gramophone* website, practicing skills with rhythm and pitch. Students express their reaction to a chosen piece in writing, in a two-dimensional work of art, and in dance.

#### Materials/Resources Required

Computer with speakers and access to the Internet **or** prerecorded music  
If available, old record players and/or gramophones



Pencils and paper, space to dance

Student Handout

Music Analysis Guide

Assessment Criteria

## Web Links

*The Virtual Gramophone*

URL: [www.nlc-bnc.ca/gramophone/](http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/gramophone/)

*Sheet Music from Canada's Past*

URL: [www.nlc-bnc.ca/sheetmusic/](http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/sheetmusic/)

## Instructional Procedures

Ask children what music is their favourite. Ask why they like it. If possible, show children an old record player or gramophone. Discuss how it works and how records can be damaged over time.

### Large-Group Work

#### Task 1

Play several songs about different subjects (love, war, remembrance, religion) from the *Virtual Gramophone* site.

Some suggestions:

- “Jesus Christ is Risen Today” (faith)
- “Jésus de Narareth” (faith)
- “C’est vous seule que j’aime” (love)
- “Laughing Water” (love)
- “Berceuse d’amour” (love)
- “All I Want is a Cottage, Some Roses and You” (love)
- “The Maple Leaf Forever” (patriotic)
- “Ô Canada, mon pays, mes amours” (patriotic)
- “Carmen Fantasy” (instrumental)
  - o This is an appealing piece of instrumental music that students can easily identify with. It exemplifies timbre by contrasting the sound of a violin with that of a piano, and by its use of harmonics. Pitch range is very noticeable as the violin has great range in this work. The violin also demonstrates the idea of chords and harmony. The music is very programmatic so it would be easy for a student to think of a story or visualize colours or ideas.
  - o “In Flanders Fields” (war and remembrance)
- “Chœur des soldats” (war and remembrance)
- “Daddy, You’ve Been a Mother to Me” (family)
- “When Did You Write to Mother Last?” (family)
- “Sur les genoux de ta mère” (family)

These can be found through the alphabetical listing at the *Virtual Gramophone* site.



Discuss several questions with the students for each song:

- What are some differences between old music and new music? Why do you think this is so?
- What do you notice about old music?
- What instruments or sound effects can you hear?
- What is this song about?
- How can you tell?
- How does the song make you feel? Do you like it? Why?
- Do you think the song is happy or sad, or something else? Why do you think that?

### ***Task 2***

Discuss the elements of music, focusing on beat, rhythm and pitch. In a song with a strong beat, students can clap their hands. Then they can follow you through the rhythm of the same or a different song, using hands like a conductor to indicate the beat.

If you wish to examine other elements of music, see the [Music Analysis Guide](#).

### **Individual Work**

#### ***Task 3***

Using a song they all like (or one you have picked), students should discuss the song's mood, how it makes them feel and what images it evokes in their minds. Students fill out the [Student Handout](#) and draw a picture of an image the music gives them. An alternate activity is to use the music as an inspiration for an illustrated story.

### **Small- or Large-Group Work**

#### ***Task 4***

How could students express these feelings and images through movement? Pick parts of the song and develop movements as a class or in groups.

**Notes on Enriching this  
Activity**

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