

BORDER CROSSING

LESSON PLANS

CLASS NOTES®

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BORDER CROSSING

KINDERGARTEN LESSON

LEARN that Border CrosSing sings a mix of early music (old music) and new music in many different languages and from many different countries in Latin America.

- Look at the countries of Latin America [on a map](#).
- Border CrosSing uses many instruments. Review each instrument—its name, how it makes sound, and what it sounds like—in the Border CrosSing Class Notes curriculum.
- Border CrosSing has a conductor. Learn about conductors and what they do in the MPR Class Notes video “[What Does a Conductor Do?](#)”
- Border CrosSing is a vocal ensemble. Learn about good singing technique in the MPR Class Notes video “[How to Sing Well.](#)”

LISTEN

- To the [Border CrosSing Lesson Plan Audio](#) playlist.

FOLLOW CUES AND IMPROVISE

- Learn and review a simple, familiar song. “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” works really well.
- Explain that when a group of musicians makes music together, they often follow a leader, or conductor, to keep the music together. Conductors help musicians start and stop at the same time. If the music speeds up or slows down, the conductor helps them speed up and slow down together.
- Sing “Twinkle” again, with teacher as conductor. Vary tempi. Repeat, asking students to take turns as conductor.
- Together with students, notice that the first line of the song has two parts. First, we say who we are talking to (the star!) by singing, “Twinkle, twinkle, little star.” Then we say, “How I wonder what you are.”
- Explore what it would sound like if everyone made up—or improvised—their own question for the star. Ask students to silently think of their own question. It should fit in the same space as “How I wonder what you are.” Give a few examples. The improvised questions might be somewhat similar to the original line, such as “Can you tell me how you are?” Or they might be really different, like “Do you like to eat ice cream?” The last word of the question might rhyme with “star,” or it might not.
- Explain that you will sing the question together, then take turns singing your improvised questions. The conductor will give a clear cue as to who will be singing the “solo.” This might take some practice and work over a few sessions. If formulating questions is difficult, as students to improvise “star sounds” during the question time.

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can watch a conductor and follow cues.
- I can improvise musical sounds.

KEY WORDS Latin America, conductor, cue, vocal ensemble, improvise

BORDER CROSSING

FIRST GRADE LESSON

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FOLLOW THE (MUSIC) LEADER

- Learn and review a simple, familiar song. “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” works really well.
- Explain that when a group of musicians makes music together, they often follow a leader, or conductor, to keep the music together. Conductors help musicians start and stop at the same time. If the music speeds up or slows down, the conductor helps them speed up and slow down together.
- Sing “Twinkle” again, with teacher as conductor. Vary tempi. Repeat, possibly asking students to take turns as conductor.
- Remind students that conductors also help a group of musicians play at the same *dynamic* level. Remember that dynamics mean loud and soft in music. Run through “Twinkle” a few times with various dynamic levels, shifting levels throughout the piece.
- Together with students, notice that the first line of the song has two parts. First, we say who we are talking to (the star!) by singing, “Twinkle, twinkle, little star.” Then we say, “How I wonder what you are.”
- Explore what it would sound like if everyone made up—or improvised—their own question for the star. Ask students to silently think of their own question. It should fit in the same space as “How I wonder what you are.” Give a few examples. The improvised questions might be somewhat similar to the original question, such as “Can you tell me how you are?” Or they might be really different, like “Do you like to eat ice cream?” The last word of the question might rhyme with “star,” or it might not. Ask students to imagine how tempo and dynamics could make their question more effective.

- Explain that you will sing the question together, then take turns singing your improvised questions. The conductor will give a clear cue as to who will be singing the “solo.” This might take some practice and work over a few sessions. When conducting, give a clear cue to the soloist, but then back off a little to give freedom for application of tempi and dynamics. If formulating questions is difficult, as students to improvise “star sounds” during the question time.

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can follow the teacher so that I start, stop, and stay together with my classmates when performing music.
- I can perform music together with others even when *tempo* or *dynamics* change from fast to slow or loud to soft.

KEY WORDS Latin America, conductor, tempo, dynamics, vocal ensemble

BORDER CROSSING

SECOND GRADE LESSON

LEARN that Border CrosSing sings a mix of early music (old music) and new music in many different languages and from many different countries in Latin America.

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- Border CrosSing has a conductor. Learn about conductors and what they do in the MPR Class Notes video “[What Does a Conductor Do?](#)” and use the [accompanying curriculum](#).
- Border CrosSing is a vocal ensemble. Learn about good singing technique in the MPR Class Notes video “[How to Sing Well](#).”
- Explain that every instrument and sound is special and unique—we call this *timbre* (TAM-ber) or tone color. We will learn to recognize the special timbres in a song performer by Border CrosSing. For an in-depth exploration of timbre and tone color, watch the Class Notes video “[Color in Music: Germaine Tailleferre](#).”

LISTEN

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IDENTIFY PATTERNS & EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS

- Listen to Border CrosSing sing “A Este Sol Peregrino.”
- Together with students, make a list of the sounds/timbres you hear. Here are the various parts, in order of entry:
 - › Double bass
 - › Harpsichord
 - › Shaker
 - › Voices—some high, some low, all entering one after another and overlapping
- As the piece progresses, notice that some of the sounds drop in and out. For example, pay attention to the shaker. We hear a clear break to a new section when the shaker stops, and then a return to the first idea when the shaker comes back in.
- Listen again and create a listening map that shows us the sections of the song. Use the shaker as the guide to notice separate sections. The top row tells us the length of each section.

- Discuss the difference in feelings or emotions between the two sections. Do you think the shaker section indicates a certain feeling, emotion, or activity (dancing, celebration)? What about the “no shaker” section (reflection, rest)?
- Notice the alternating pattern of shaker/no shaker.
- Listen again as students follow along with the listening map. Suggest motions to go along with each section.

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can identify different timbres, including the human voice, shakers, harpsichord, and double bass.
- I can recognize patterns in music.

KEY WORDS Latin America, conductor, vocal ensemble, timbre, patterns

BORDER CROSSING

THIRD THROUGH SIXTH GRADE LESSON

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LISTEN

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COMPARE & CONTRAST

- Explain that you will listen, map, compare, and contrast two different pieces performed by Border CrosSing.
- Listen to Border CrosSing sing “[A Este Sol Peregrino.](#)” Note that it is from Peru and is sung in Spanish. It was composed during the 18th century, by Tomas de Torrejón.
- Together with students, make a list of the sounds/timbres you hear. Here are the various parts, in order of entry:
 - › Double bass
 - › Harpsichord
 - › Shaker
 - › Voices—some high, some low, all entering one after another and overlapping
- As the piece progresses, notice that some of the sounds drop in and out. For example, pay attention to the shaker. We hear a clear break to a new section when the shaker stops, and then a return to the first idea when the shaker comes back in.

- Listen again and create a listening map that shows us the sections of the song. Use the shaker as the guide to notice separate sections. The top row tells us the length of each section.

0:00- 1:18	1:18-1:52	1:52-2:17	2:17-2:54	2:54-4:18
SHAKER! (plus double bass, harp-sichord, and voices)	NO SHAKER	SHAKER! (plus double bass, harp-sichord, and voices)	NO SHAKER	SHAKER! (plus double bass, harp-sichord, and voices)

- Discuss the difference in feelings or emotions between the two sections. Do you think the shaker section indicates a certain feeling, emotion, or activity (dancing, celebration)? What about the “no shaker” section (reflection, rest)?
- Notice the alternating pattern of shaker/no shaker.
- Listen again as students follow along with the listening map. Suggest motions to go along with each section.
- Then listen to the second piece, “[Tleycantimo Choquilia](#).” Note that it is from Mexico and is sung in Nahuatl. It was composed during the 17th century by Gaspar Fernandes.
- Together with students, listen and list the different sounds/timbres you hear. Here are they are, in order of entry:
 - › Drums
 - › Harpsichord
 - › Single voice
 - › Many voices
- Notice that several times throughout the piece, the music slows down (*ritardando*). The music rests for a bit on a note that is held (*fermata*), then starts again, with the same cheery rhythm (a tempo). These *ritardandos* and *fermatas* separate the piece into sections. Unlike “A Este sol Peregrino,” the sounds/timbres in each section are the same. A listening map for “Tleycantimo Choquiliya” might look like this:

0:00- 0:45	0:45	0:45- 1:23	1:23	1:23- 2:00	2:00	2:00- 2:40	2:40	2:40- 3:19	3:19 3:23
#1	<i>rit. & fermata</i>	#2	<i>rit. & fermata</i>	#3	<i>rit. & fermata</i>	#4	<i>rit. & fermata</i>	#5	FINE! (or- THE END!)
									

- Listen again, conducting along, noticing the *ritardandos*, *fermatas*, and *a tempos*. Expand the grid to include instrumentation if desired.
- Continue by comparing and contrasting the two pieces. Use a grid to structure your observations. Encourage the integration of music vocabulary. Modify to include terms that align with other class activities. Prompt students to comment on technical and theoretical aspects (both include harpsichord; both have five sections; one follows an alternating pattern between sections; one uses *ritardando*, *fermatas*, and *a tempo* to separate the sections) as well as cultural/historical details (one is from Mexico, one is from Peru). Adjust to various grade levels and levels of experience by encouraging use of terms aligned with learning goals for each group.

Observations from “A Este Sol Peregrino”	Observations from “Tleycantimo Chociliya”	Things I noticed in both pieces

LEARNING CHECKLIST

- I can identify and describe elements in a song.
- I can recognize patterns in music.
- I can identify *ritardando*, *fermata*, and *a tempo* in a piece of music.
- I can compare and contrast two different songs.

KEY WORDS Latin America, conductor, vocal ensemble, harpsichord, ritardando, fermata, a tempo