

THE IMITATION GAME

LESSON/ACTIVITY PLAN

OBJECTIVE:

1. Students will create music using the following four types of imitation:
 - a. Imitation of fellow musicians
 - b. Imitation of life sounds
 - c. Imitation of emotions or feelings
 - d. Imitation of nature
2. Students identify four types of imitation through listening.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Review the Class Notes: Artists PowerPoint presentation in order to remind and reinforce the four types of imitation.
2. Try each style as a group. Use your creativity and imagination. Here are a few specific suggestions for practicing each type together with students.
 - a. Imitation of fellow musicians.
 - i. Sing any favorite classroom song (or a new classroom song) call-and-response style. Call-and-response is a clear and easy example of musicians imitating each other.
 - ii. Listen to a short excerpt of a solo instrumentalist playing his or her instrument. After listening, encourage students to try to create that sound with their voices. The final product might not actually sound all that much like the instrument, but the process reinforces the concept. Trumpet works well for this exercise.
 - iii. View the Class Notes video [*The Musical Round: A Roundabout Tale*](#), which clarifies how sung rounds are built on a kind of imitation, i.e., different groups singing an identical tune, but in precisely staggered fashion.
 - b. Imitation of life sounds
 - i. Using classroom instruments and/or voices, ask students to imitate a wide variety of everyday sounds: trains, cars, dishwasher, blender, cell phone, lawn mower—the possibilities are endless.



- ii. Choose a favorite from the experimental sounds you create in step one. Ask students to use that sound as the foundation for a short composition. These may seem like vague instructions, but creative students will latch right on to the idea.
- iii. If students need a little guidance or encouragement, you might suggest they use the “life sound” as a repeating ostinato and then layer a melody over the top.

c. Imitation of emotions or feelings

- i. Identify an emotion or feelings and ask students to create a sound (on an instrument or with their voice) that expresses that emotion.
- ii. Ask students to create a handful of “Feeling Flashcards.” They will basically look like a series of emoji icons—a happy face, a sad face, etc. Listen to a wide variety of music and ask students to flash a card with the emotion/feeling they hear in the music.

d. Imitation of nature

- i. Choose an aspect of nature—water is a particularly good one—and see how many ways you can imitate the sound using voices, instruments, or found objects.
- ii. Still focusing on the same aspect of nature, do some research to see if you can discover how much music has been inspired by that subject. You can choose to limit you list to one genre of music or draw from a wide variety of music. Here’s a non-comprehensive list for “water” that draws from classical music.

1. *Jeux d’eau*, M. Ravel
2. *Prelude Op. 28, No. 15*, “Raindrop”, F. Chopin
3. *La Mer*, C. Debussy

There are a number of other composers who had special interest in certain aspects of nature. For example, Oliver Messiaen was obsessed with birdsong and you can hear references to that in much of his work. Watch Classical MPR’s educational video [Class Notes: Dvorak in the New World](#) to learn about the influence of nature on Dvorak.

3. Take all of this a step further by asking students to

create a composition portfolio that includes each type of imitation. Present student work for the class, asking if the audience can cite the kind of imitation being used in each presented work.

STANDARDS

These activities incorporate several aspects of the Minnesota Standards for the Arts, especially:

1. Grades 4 – 5. 1. Artistic Foundations 1. Demonstrate knowledge of the foundations of the arts area. Music. 4.1.1.3.1. Describe the elements of music including melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, texture, form and their related concepts.
2. Grades 4 – 5. 2. Artistic Process: Create or Make. 1. Create or make in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations. Music. 4.2.1.3.1. Improvise and compose rhythms, melodies, and accompaniments using voice or instruments to express a specific musical idea.
3. Grades 4 – 5. 3. Artistic Process: Perform or Present. 1. Perform or present in a variety of contexts in the arts area using the artistic foundations. Music. 4.3.1.3.1. Sing alone and in groups such as rounds and part songs or play instruments alone and in a group.



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