

**Standards,  
Benchmarks &  
Indicators Covered in  
This Unit**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

**MUSIC**

**ELA STANDARD 3**

*Reading Process: Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self-Monitoring Strategies*

➤ **Benchmark C**

*Draw conclusions from information.*

**Indicator gr3:4**

*Summarize texts, sequencing information accurately and include main idea and details as appropriate.*

**ELA STANDARD 5**

*Reading Applications: Literary Text*

➤ **Benchmark A**

*Compare and contrast plot across literary works.*

**Indicator gr3:3**

*Retell the plot sequence.*

➤ **Benchmark B**

*Use supporting details to identify and describe main ideas, characters and setting.*

**Indicator gr3:2**

*Use concrete details from the text to describe characters and setting.*

➤ **Benchmark E**

*Identify the theme of a literary work.*

**Indicator gr3:6**

*Identify stated and implied themes.*

**ELA STANDARD 7**

*Writing Applications*

➤ **Benchmark A**

*Write narrative accounts that develop character, setting and plot.*

**Indicator gr3:1**

*Write stories that sequence events and include descriptive details and vivid language to develop characters, settings and plot.*

(continued)

**MUSIC STANDARD 3**

## *Singing a Story*

### Creating Song Lyrics Using Narrative Structure

#### Overview

*Students will create their own song lyrics based upon a musical engagement experience or previously read work.* Students will use their understanding of narrative elements to incorporate similar fundamentals of character, setting, conflict, point-of-view... into their lyrical creations. This activity aims to illuminate to students the basic elements & structures of narrative that exist in various art forms.

#### By the End of this Unit, Students Will Be Able to:

- Identify common elements of a narrative
- Reflect on and express how a story told in a song is similar/different from a story told in writing.

#### Student Work Product/Assessment

- Students create their own narrative song lyrics, set to a familiar tune, and perform for the class.

#### Time Required

- Two or more forty minute sessions (depending on the class).
- Musical performance, workshop or residency (varies by engagement).

#### Required Materials

- CD player, computer with speakers or other listening device
- One or more musical selections (see page 2 for suggestions)

#### Appropriate Engagements

Any music performance, residency or workshop

#### Teacher/Music Specialist Preparation

If your building has a music teacher, review this unit with them. You may choose to team teach this with them. He/she may have suggestions of songs to use or consider the ballads and tunes noted in the sidebar on page three of this unit. You may find the lyrics by using a simple Google search or research at your local library.

#### Teacher/Arts Provider Preparation

Teacher and arts provider have conversation/email exchange. Discuss lesson unit in regards to the scheduled arts engagement.

### **BEFORE THE ARTS EXPERIENCE**

#### **Pre-Engagement Class Activities**

1 40 minute session

#### *Instructions*

1. Teacher reviews fundamentals of Narrative Structure (see page 3 of this unit).
2. Teacher selects a song (particularly one that tells a story) and plays it for the students. *\*Consult your music specialist for suggestions or consider the ballads and tunes noted in the list in the margin. You may find the lyrics by using a simple Google or research at your local library.*

Analyzing and Responding

- **Benchmark C**  
*Discuss and evaluate individual and group music performance.*

**Indicator gr3.2**  
*Identify how elements of music communicate ideas or moods.*

**Indicator gr3.5**  
*Discuss and evaluate individual music performance.*

**MUSIC STANDARD 4**  
Valuing Music/Aesthetic Reflection

- **Benchmark A**  
*Reflect on their own performances and the performances of others.*

**Indicator gr3.1**  
*Participate in developmentally appropriate music activities.*

**Indicator gr3.2**  
*Develop criteria for reflecting on their performances.*

- **Benchmark B**  
*Demonstrate audience behavior appropriate for the context and style of music performed*

**Indicator gr3.3**  
*Attend live music performances and demonstrate audience behavior appropriate for the context and style of the music performed.*

- **Benchmark C**  
*Demonstrate how music communicates meaning of text, feelings, moods or images, and influences personal preferences.*

**Indicator gr3.4**  
*Respond intellectually to a variety of age-appropriate music.*

**Indicator gr3.5**  
*Demonstrate how music communicates meaning of text, feelings and moods or images.*

3. Teacher leads students in retelling the story that the lyrics of the song illustrate.
4. Teacher replays the song and asks students to take notes & identify the following elements in the song: Who are the characters? Where does the story take place? What is the major problem trying to be worked out? How does the problem get solved?
5. Ask students how/why singing a song is different from merely telling a story.

**FOLLOWING THE ARTS EXPERIENCE**

**Post-Engagement Class Activities**

1 40-50 minute session

**Instructions**

1. Following the engagement, teacher guides students in recalling the narrative elements that were evident in the experience.
2. Students then break into groups of three or four. The teacher may want to assign the groups.
3. Students are assigned to retell a story, in the form of a song, based upon the content of the engagement *or* a story they have read, using a familiar tune (such as “Old MacDonald”) as the basis. When having students select a familiar tune, remind them that they may want to choose a song that has both verses and a chorus.
  - a. Students select the story they will be putting into song form.
  - b. Students identify the narrative elements of the story they will be putting into song form: characters, setting, conflict/resolution, plot and theme for the song.
  - c. Students identify what the song’s beginning, middle & end will be.
  - d. Students begin to write their song lyrics. *Remind students about the ways verses and choruses/refrains organize the stories that songs tell*—i.e. the verse often develops the plot in the lyrics, while repeated sections such as the choruses/refrains often emphasize a message or a mood.
4. An option to build vocabulary is to require that students use 4-6 words from their high-frequency word list or other studied vocabulary.
5. Students perform their songs for one another.
6. You may consult the storytelling rubrics provided with this lesson to assess the each students retelling of the story (Attachment A).
7. A song writing rubric has been included (Attachment B) for you to assess the students written songs.

### NARRATIVE SONG SUGGESTIONS

- “The Erie Canal.” Performed by Bruce Springsteen on *We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions* (Sony BMG) Tells the story of working on the Erie Canal from Albany to Buffalo.
- “Five Feet High and Rising.” Performed by Johnny Cash on *The Essential Johnny Cash* (Columbia) A child asks his parents about rising floodwaters, and their answers tell the story of the consequences of the rising waters.
- “The Ballad of Casey McPhee” on *C is for Cookie: Cookie’s Favorite Songs* (Sony Wonder). Cookie Monster’s character helps tell the story of train conductor Casey McPhee and challenges met as the train carries cargo of sweets.
- “Just Happy to be Me” on *Songs from the Street: 35 Years of Music* (Sony Wonder). This is a Sesame Street collection. The character Kingston Livingston III performs this song (to the accompaniment of the Fugees on this recording) to tell a story of how he stays true to himself when pressured to follow the crowd.
- “Johnny One Note” performed by The Supremes on *The Supremes Sing Rodgers and Hart: The Complete Recordings* (Motown). The classical music composers Rodgers and Hart composed this tune, which tells the story of how Johnny’s voice proves powerful despite the fact that he has a very limited range of only one pitch.
- “Everybody Loves to Cha Cha Cha” Performed by Sam Cooke on *The Best of Sam Cooke* (RCA). This song tells a story about a girl learning a dance style when her dance partner discovers she does not know how to cha cha.

### HELPFUL WEBSITES

**Information on teaching narrative structure . . .**  
<http://wwwfp.education.tas.gov.au/english/narrative.htm>

**National Council of Teachers of English**  
[http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson\\_view.asp?id=223](http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=223)

**Electronic Literature and Language**  
[http://users.aber.ac.uk/jpm/ellsa/ellsa\\_index.html](http://users.aber.ac.uk/jpm/ellsa/ellsa_index.html)

### NARRATIVE/STORY ELEMENTS

**Character:** a person, or sometimes even an animal, who takes part in the action of a story or other literary work.

**Conflict:** a struggle between two people or things in a story. The main character is usually on one side of the central conflict.

**Plot:** a series of events and character actions that relate to the central conflict.

**Setting:** the time and place in which a story happens. Authors often use descriptions of landscape, scenery, buildings, seasons or weather to provide a strong sense of setting.

**Theme:** the central idea or belief in a story.

### MUSIC TERMS

**Song:** a lyric poem or ballad that can tell a story.

**Verse:** part of the song that develops the plot in the lyrics.

**Chorus/Refrain:** repeated sections in a song that often emphasize a message or mood.

### Further Thoughts on Narrative Structure

Although narrative structure varies from story to story, the common features include:

- **Beginning/Orientation:** This sets the scene, creating a visual picture of the setting, atmosphere and time of the story. Characters are introduced and clues are set in place for the coming complication.
- **Problem/Complication:** This is where a problem or complication occurs that affects the setting, time or characters.
- **Problem seems to be resolved/Minor Resolution:** Everything seems to be resolved.
- **New Problem/Complication:** The problem or complication is now often worse than before.
- **Problem is solved/Ending/Resolution:** The problem is solved and the story ends.
- **Moral/Coda/Evaluative ending:** There may be a moral or message at the end of the story.

**Assessment Rubrics**

**STORY RETELLING RUBRIC**

4 THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING	3 SOLID UNDERSTANDING	2 SOME UNDERSTANDING	1 LITTLE OR INACCURATE UNDERSTANDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accurate recall of story elements:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Setting</li> <li>○ Character</li> <li>○ Plot</li> <li>○ Implications for future</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ All elements present</li> <li>▪ Sentences are well organized.</li> <li>▪ Gestures and sounds created and used appropriately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accurate recall of story elements:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Setting</li> <li>○ Character</li> <li>○ Plot</li> <li>○ Implications for future</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Possible omission of 1 key element</li> <li>▪ Sentences are mostly organized.</li> <li>▪ Gestures and/or sounds used.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accurate recall of story elements:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Setting</li> <li>○ Character</li> <li>○ Plot</li> <li>○ Implications for future</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Omission of 1 or more key elements</li> <li>▪ Sentences are disorganized.</li> <li>▪ Some gestures and sounds used.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confusion of story elements and/or inability to tell what happened.</li> <li>▪ No gestures or sounds used.</li> </ul>

*Adapted from: Lorrie Shepard, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO. From the Chicago Public Schools Rubric Bank, [www.school.discovery.com/schrockguide/assess.html](http://www.school.discovery.com/schrockguide/assess.html).*

**ORAL READING PERFORMANCE RUBRIC**

EXCELLENT	AVERAGE	POOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Groups words logically when reading aloud.</li> <li>▪ Changes voice tone to emphasize certain content.</li> <li>▪ Alters voice and pace in accordance with text punctuation.</li> <li>▪ Uses gestures and sounds to identify characters and actions.</li> <li>▪ Can be heard by all in audience.</li> <li>▪ Enunciates each word clearly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Usually groups words in a logical manner.</li> <li>▪ Uneven emphasis given to important content.</li> <li>▪ Tone and pace follow text punctuation fairly well.</li> <li>▪ Some use of gestures and sounds to identify characters and actions.</li> <li>▪ Loudness of voice varies.</li> <li>▪ Mispronounces some words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reads word by word with no logical grouping.</li> <li>▪ Speaks in a monotone, with little change in pace or voice inflections.</li> <li>▪ Little or no use of gestures and sounds to identify characters and actions.</li> <li>▪ Speaks too softly to be heard by all in audience.</li> <li>▪ Slurs and mumbles words.</li> </ul>

*Adapted from: Airasian, Peter W. Classroom Assessment, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991, p.295. From the Chicago Public Schools Rubric Bank, [www.school.discovery.com/schrockguide/assess.html](http://www.school.discovery.com/schrockguide/assess.html).*

**SONG WRITING RUBRIC**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Content</b>	The song incorporates all of the story elements and has a clear beginning middle and end.	The song demonstrates some understanding of story elements and has a beginning middle and end.	The song demonstrates limited understanding of story elements and shows an attempt made at including a beginning, middle and end	The song does not demonstrate familiarity with the story elements and has no clear beginning middle or end
<b>Mechanics</b>	The work demonstrates a high skill level and is very well organized using lyrics and chorus/refrain	The work demonstrates an average skill level and is adequately organized using lyrics and chorus/refrain	The work demonstrates a limited skill level and makes an attempt at being organized by lyrics and chorus/refrain	The work does not demonstrate skill and contains no clear structure of lyrics and chorus/refrain
<b>Creativity</b>	The work shows a high degree of imagination or creativity.	The work shows some imagination or creativity.	The work shows little imagination or creativity.	The work shows no level of imagination or creativity.
<b>Presentation</b>	The song is completed and clearly presented on paper or using a computer-writing program.	The written song is presented on paper but is incomplete.	The written song is presented on paper but is illegible.	No written song is submitted.