



Lesson: Listen, Reflect, and Respond to *A+: A "Precise" Prelude and An "Excellent" March*

OVERVIEW

Before students start playing *A+*, they will engage in a collaborative inquiry protocol called Descriptive Review. This protocol or process encourages listeners to think independently, use prior knowledge and experience, and think in original ways to develop a group description of the piece.

LEARNING GOALS

Students will listen, reflect, and develop a collaborative description of *A+*. Experiencing this process will develop the first layer of musical understanding as they learn to play the piece.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- [Recording of A+](#)
- The 3 questions written on the board or chart paper
- Copies of the [Listening Log](#) for each student (optional)

PROCESS

NOTE: Do not reveal the title or any details about the music before you listen, but do describe the process.

1. Remind students of how appropriate brainstorming behaviors: all responses have equal worth and all voices should be heard. When following a collaborative process, students should remember to describe and comment without making any judgmental statements. To clarify this point, make up sample comments that communicate first a judgmental, then a non-judgmental stance.
2. Write the 3 key questions on the board or on chart paper at the top of 3 columns.
 - *What do you notice? What's going on in the music?* (Describe without judgment.)
 - *What questions do you have about the music?* (I wonder...?)
 - *What meaning or understanding is intended or expressed by this music?* (Speculate about what the composer wants you to understand or feel. What is s/he expressing?)
3. Play the recording as students reflect on the first question. If you have distributed the optional worksheet, students can jot down their thoughts as the music plays. Repeat the question and take their comments.
4. Write what they say on the board or charts. **Do not explain the music or add your own words and ideas**, but prompt further responses by asking clarifying questions. ("Tell me more about that. What did you hear that made you say that? What else did you hear?") Note that this is sometimes a difficult task for teachers.

If you rephrase when writing a response, check with the responder.

When a response is repeated, add a ✓ to the prior response.

5. Listen again and pose the second, then the third question, using the same process and collecting responses on the board/chart.
6. Ask individuals and groups to read the three word banks of descriptive words, phrases, and terms out loud with EXPRESSION.
7. Congratulate them on their ability to independently describe with so much detail in a piece they will soon start to play.
8. Leave the word banks on display. You can refer to them and add new words as the band learns to play A+. They will also be helpful in fulfilling other tasks related to the piece.

INFORMAL ASSESSMENT

The musical terms and related vocabulary students use to describe music is an informal assessment of their knowledge and understanding of terms and concepts. As students become familiar with the Descriptive Review Protocol, you can assess their individual ability to describe and analyze music using a tool such as the Listening Log.

EXTENSIONS

- Use the word banks as vocabulary prompts when students write program notes for A+. (See lesson: Write Your Own Program Notes)
- Build a word cloud for A+ from student responses. Word Clouds provide a visual of the range of ideas and the agreement and diversity of opinions. The free site, Wordle, (<http://www.wordle.net/>) provides a program for building clouds from student responses. Print and post them.
- Use the Descriptive Protocol when you introduce other new pieces. Try it as a small group process and use the Listening Log included with this lesson.
- Learn more about Descriptive Review and other student-centered processes developed by the Perpich Center for Arts Education at http://opd.mpls.k12.mn.us/sites/daf1e7b3-5a92-4df1-9b5c-67189b22643f/uploads/103007-ALL_ARTFUL_TOOLS_2.pdf

LISTENING LOG (A worksheet for use with Descriptive Review)

What do you notice about this music?	What questions do you have about the music? What does it make you wonder about?	What is the composer expressing in the music? What does s/he want you to think about, feel, or understand?

