



Lesson Plans: Listening & Responding to *Odysseus and the Sirens*

INTRODUCTION

When students listen and respond to a musical work before they learn it, or during rehearsals, they are better able to go beyond their individual parts to focus on the whole piece and its elements and characteristics. The three lessons in this section provide strategies that allow deeper interactions with *Odysseus and the Sirens*.

- In Lesson #1, students will listen and describe the elements and musical characteristics of *Odysseus and the Sirens* in detail.
- In Lesson #2, students will speculate about how composer Dana Wilson expressed specific story landmarks through sound, identifying musical details for five specific events, settings, or characters.
- In Lesson #3, students will create an original listening map for the piece.

Educators can use one, two, or all three of these lessons. Segments of each can be assigned as homework or extra-credit projects.

Lesson Plan One: Listen & Describe the Music (Looking for Musical Details)

OVERVIEW

Using the opening question of the [Descriptive Review protocol](#), students will listen, then describe the details they notice using musical terms and additional descriptive vocabulary. This lesson is most effective as an introduction to the piece before rehearsals, but could be used after they begin the learning process.

LEARNING GOAL

Students will develop a collaborative description of the music through focused listening and detailed describing using the Descriptive Review protocol.

MATERIALS

- Program notes (found on pg 18 of Teacher Guide)
- Student reading, "Odysseus Avoids a Disaster "(located in Interdisciplinary Connections folder)
- Multiple sheets of chart paper and markers or electronic display capability

PROCESS

1. Do not reveal the title, but describe the process and the end goal:
 - You will listen closely to a piece we will learn this semester and brainstorm together to develop a description of the music using musical vocabulary.
 - The words and phrases you use are important, so they will be recorded on the charts. They are a group description of the music.
 - As you hear each other's descriptive words, you may have even more thoughts about the musical details of the piece.
 - The big challenge is to describe without judging the music.
 - My job is to facilitate. I'll ask the question and record your responses. I will **not** make comments about your suggestions or try to impose my thoughts and ideas.
2. Post this question on the board/screen/top of the chart paper.

What do you notice in the music? What's going on?

- Play the recording of a section or the whole piece.
 - Repeat the question. Take their responses and write them on the charts.
 - Play it again, asking: *What else do you notice?*
3. If students veer off into personal opinions (judgements), or memories, metaphors, and stories, remind them that right now they are describing the music. If such opinions emerge, redirect them by asking for the evidence or reason for their comment: *What did you hear that made you say that?* Tell them they will be able to express those thoughts and ideas in another activity (Create A Listening Map). Here are a few more tips:

- **DO NOT** edit student responses without asking permission. If you rephrase when writing a response, check with the responder.
- **Refrains from explaining** the music, but ask clarifying questions.
What did you hear that made you say that?
- If a student repeats a comment, add a check to the first iteration.
- **Do not ask** leading questions or complete student comments with "teacher words."

***Connections to the
National Core Anchor
Standards in the Arts***
*Responding:
Understanding and
evaluating how the arts
convey meaning.*

*Anchor Standard #7.
Perceive and analyze
artistic works.*

4. Listen one last time with the descriptive word bank charts in clear view. Post the charts on the wall, post them on the band web page, or make photo copies for students.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

The descriptive chart provides evidence of the groups' ability to analyze and describe what they hear in the music and gives the director information about areas for further instruction.

EXTENSIONS

- If students have not yet been introduced to the piece, ask them to use their imaginations to SPECULATE about the story in the music. Working in small groups and using the descriptive charts for key vocabulary, ask each group to write a one paragraph summary of the story line they imagine is embedded in the music. Share the story summaries with the whole group. Compare their speculative opinions to the actual story within the piece when you begin rehearsing the music.
- Use the Descriptive Review protocol when introducing other musical works to your students.

Lesson Plan: Match Story Events to their Musical Details

What did the Composer do to Tell a Story?

OVERVIEW

Composer Dana Wilson employed specific techniques and musical details to convey the story of *Odysseus and the Sirens*. Students will hear the story, listen to the piece with fellow students, locate six specific musical events, then describe the composer's musical choices for each event. They are searching for the techniques used by Wilson to make the music sound like the story action. Use this lesson while rehearsing the piece once students have a sense of the whole work.

Consider assigning this activity as a homework or small group project that students complete on their own time.

Connections to the National Core Anchor Standards in the Arts

Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.

Anchor Standard #8. Interpret intent and meaning in the artistic work.

LEARNING GOAL

Students will connect five events in the story to their place in the piece, then describe the musical choices the composer made to convey each event. Student work will be summarized in a listening log.

MATERIALS

- Recording
- [Prezi](#) based on the graphic storybook *Odysseus: Escaping Poseidon's Curse*
- [YouTube score/audio follow-along](#) for *Odysseus and the Sirens*
- Brainstorming charts from Lesson #1 for descriptive vocabulary

PROCESS

1. Introduce students to the activity and articulate the end goal:
 - Imagine that *Odysseus and the Sirens* is a film score.
 - Remember the story, then follow the score on the screen as you listen to the music.
 - Match a list of story events their places in the recording and the score.
 - Describe the musical details used by the composer to sound like the story event, character, or setting.
 - Document your work on a graphic organizer.
2. Focus on the story of Odysseus' adventure with the sirens by viewing the Prezi included with this curriculum ([click here to open](#)), and/or reading the story synopsis.
3. Divide into partners or trios.
 - Distribute the Listening Log graphic organizer and answer any questions students have.
 - In groups, students read the events they are investigating. They then listen to the recording, follow the score (on the screen or as a hard copy), and locate the designate measures related to each event.
 - With their partners, students speculate about where the story events are turned into musical sounds in the score. Note: sometimes Wilson makes descriptive notes in the score.
 - When they find connections, encourage students to discuss what they heard that led to their opinions. Then they can write down the musical details they heard that led them to match up the action in the story line with the musical events.
4. Reconvene and ask students to share their work. Prompt students to look for places where others agree and places where there are multiple opinions.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTION

The completed Listening Logs provide evidence of musical thinking and learning. If using as an assessment, create a simple rubric to guide students and establish criteria.

EXTENSIONS

- *Odysseus and the Sirens* is **program music**, a composition where the composer uses musical elements and devices to convey aspects of something outside of music. Use a similar process to other programmatic band pieces to engage students in deeper thought about the musical content of an extra-musical story or idea in programmatic works.
- If you have students write their own program notes (located in Interdisciplinary Connections folder) the information of their listening logs provides an excellent resource for writing about *Odysseus and the Sirens*.

Lesson Plan: Create a Listening Map for *Odysseus & the Sirens*

OVERVIEW

A **listening map** is a graphic representation that symbolizes the essential features of a musical work in a visual format. Students will create an original map of the music using a format of their choice. This activity is an extension of the prior lessons. It can be used as an assessment of learning or an extra credit project for a smaller group of students. It can be crafted by individual students or by collaborating groups. Creating a listening map might also be assigned as a homework project.

LEARNING GOAL

Students can demonstrate their understanding of the music, the composer's intentions, and their grasp of the musical details of the piece by creating an original graphic listening map.

MATERIALS

- Descriptive charts as a word resource
- Recording of "Hoedown" from *Rodeo*, Aaron Copland
- "Hoedown" Listening Map Sample
- Planner for the Listening Map Project
- Recording [web link](#) for students
- [YouTube score/audio follow-along](#) for *Odysseus and the Sirens*
- Web links to sample listening maps

Before You Begin ~~Public~~ Checklist for creating a listening map

Decide how you would like students to work on this project and select a plan that fits your ensemble. Options might include:

- An extra-credit project to be completed on their own
- An assigned class project for individuals or pairs to be completed outside of class
- An assigned project completed during class time. (This option suggests a rotating schedule where small groups leave rehearsal for a set amount of time to work in an adjacent space.)
- Other formats you've used before

Connections to the National Core Anchor Standards in the Arts

*Responding:
Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.*

*Anchor Standard #8.
Interpret intent and meaning in the artistic work.*

EXAMPLES OF LISTENING MAPS

- ["Hallelujah Chorus" from Messiah](#), George Fredrich Handel. Scroll down opening page for the graphic map.
- [Three maps](#), 1 graphics only and 2 with text and graphics for "Rondeau" from Suite No. 2, J.S. Bach, "Jupiter" from *The Planets* by Gustav Holst, and "Variations on a Shaker Hymn," from *Appalachian Spring* by Aaron Copland.
- ["Hedwig's Theme" from Harry Potter film score](#) by John Williams. [Prezi Listening Map](#) by Hannah Wiley
- ["Hedwig's Theme"](#) in a Prezi Map by Meredith Heckman,
- Animated short movie, ["Aquarium" from Carnival of the Animals](#) by Saint Saens on YouTube,

PROCESS

1. Write the term LISTENING MAP on the board:
 - Brainstorm a temporary definition. It can be based on speculation or guesses.
 - Have they ever used one?
2. Display the map for “Hoedown” from *Rodeo* by Aaron Copland. It is one format for listening maps. Play the recording and help students follow the map if they need assistance.
 - Return to the definition and add details.
 - Main ideas to focus on are that maps are visual, organized around the flow of the music, and include key details or landmarks of the piece.

Definition: Listening Map

A listening map is a visual organizer that helps listeners follow the flow of a piece of music, locate some of its key landmarks, and understand the overall work.

3. Generate a discussion around this question:

*If you were creating a listening map for *Odysseus and the Sirens*, what would you do? How would you design it?*

- Tell students that they’ve just begun the process of creating an original listening map for the piece.
 - Distribute the Planner Worksheet and walk them through the steps.
 - Urge them to think about a variety of media they might use to create a listening map.
 - Share examples of graphic maps, for example Prezi, PowerPoint, and video maps. Select examples from the resource box, search on your own, or ask students to look for examples on the web using key word: listening map, graphic listening map, Prezi listening map, PowerPoint listening map, etc.
4. Set a specific due date.
 5. When project is completed, scan into electronic format and have band members view the work as the recording plays. If students are writing their own program notes, their listening logs from Lesson Two, and listening maps will provide valuable information.

What format or combination of formats can students use?

- Original drawings or clip art
- Original text using descriptive language
- Other forms of text: captions, short word phrases, titles & headers
- Drawings and text
- Power Point
- iMovie
- Prezi
- Another electronic format
- Live people and choreographed movement or dramatization

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

- Create a rubric for the map project (or use the sample included) to assess the students’ work.
- Ask students to exchange maps, follow a map created by another group as the music plays, then provide feedback on how effectively it communicates aspects of the piece.
- Scan the maps into your computer and display them as students listen to the piece, then provide comments and suggestions.

EXTENSIONS

- Student work can be shared with the audience at the performances of *Odysseus and the Sirens* electronically, as hard copies posted on the wall, or as copies shared with the audience. Consider playing the piece a second time for an audience as they follow projections of one or more maps.
- If students write program notes, they can incorporate the information from their maps into their notes.
- Encourage students to map other pieces that they are rehearsing.

Dimensions of the project	1	2	3
Medium or media used for the project	The media/medium used could not be easily followed by the listener and did not follow the musical work.	The medium/media used appropriately, was clear; it was connected to the musical work, and it could be followed by the listener.	The medium/media used was clear and skillfully used as well as interesting. Held listeners attention, connected to the music, and was easy to follow.
Content; specific landmarks and events from <i>Odysseus and the Siren</i>	One or two landmarks used in the map.	Three or four landmarks used in the map.	Five or more landmarks used in the map.
Technical terms for musical descriptions used correctly.	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Connections between the music and the images used were apparent and logical	Connections unclear	Connections were sometime clear and moving in the direction of clarity	Connection were generally always obvious and logical
Overall accuracy of the content	Some of the content presented was accurate	More than half of the content was accurate.	Almost all, or all the content presented was accurate.