



Lesson Plans: Listen & Respond to *RHYTHM STAND*

INTRODUCTION

Students can respond to *Rhythm Stand* in a variety of ways. Here are two activities for engaging your students in focused listening when introducing and rehearsing the piece.

1. Listen and follow a “map” of the music to help students perceive the elements of the whole work, notice key landmarks, and recognize the individual sections.
2. After rehearsing the work, listen again and ask students to notice the descriptive language used to communicate and define various parts of the piece. Challenge students to re-write key phrases using their own word choices to describe what they hear and their personal impressions of the piece. This strategy encourages musical thinking and individual interpretations of music.

Lesson 1: Listen with a Map

In the early stages of learning the piece, students can develop a concept of the whole work by using visual maps. The short lesson opens with a listening activity. Then students follow one of the two maps as the music plays to help them comprehend the elements in and the structure of the music.

LEARNING GOAL

BEFORE seeing the score or parts, students will be able to discuss specific details of the piece after listening and following a map of the work.

MATERIALS

- Pencil and classroom music stand
- One of the two listening map in the desired format (paper copies, electronic image). One is more detailed with more music vocabulary, the other is broken down into sections with less text.
- Recording of *Rhythm Stand*

PROCESS

1. Introduce the title of their new band piece and play the first 14 seconds of the recording (m.1 through m.8) to focus attention and interest.
 - Ask them to speculate about what instruments open the piece.
 - Play it a second time. After they've run through a variety of responses and are out of ideas, hold up the pencil and play some rhythmic phrases on the flat desk of the music stand. Remind them of the title again and see if they "get it." One of the key instruments in "Rhythm Stand" are music stands, just like the ones they use in band.
 - Prepare for the occasional surprise; the student who immediately identifies the timbre!
2. Display or distribute copies of either map. Direct students to scan the image and describe what they notice about the map with some details.
3. Read the descriptions of selected sections of the map. Then challenge students to stay on track as they follow the map with the recording. After listening, ask them to discuss what they noticed about the music. They can use the visual map to help them amplify their responses.

ASSESSMENT

Ask students to listen and keep track of where they think they are in the piece by moving a pencil point or other marker along the outline as the music plays. Observe their ability to track where they are in the piece as it unfolds.

EXTENSION

Both versions of the listening maps highlight the music vocabulary students will use as they rehearse and perform *Rhythm Stand*. Assign a related homework project directing students to find and write definitions for the bolded/underlined terms.

Lesson 2: Writing Musical Impressions

In this lesson, students will think about why and how writers use figurative language to describe music in concert program notes, blogs, website and newspaper reviews, and in magazines about music. They will invent their own descriptive phrases for key sections of the music using language that invites others to read about it and be interested in hearing it. Because of the interdisciplinary connections to language arts, consider partnering with the Language Arts teachers in your school on this lesson.

LEARNING GOAL

Using the musical evidence, they hear plus their imaginations, students will create text to describe their own 'musical impressions' of the piece.

MATERIALS

- Recording of the music
- Copies of the two Listening Maps – decide if you will use one or both versions
- Paper or electronic copies of examples of figurative language in writing about music
- Writing materials
- Writing Assignment sheet included with this lesson

PROCESS

Decide if this is a homework assignment or a lesson to use during class time and which version of the map you will use.

1. Tell students that the writer who wrote about *Rhythm Stand* used similes, metaphors, and forms of figurative language to appeal to the senses and imaginations of those listening to and learning to play the piece. Their assignment is to come up with other interesting words and phrases to create alternative colorful descriptions for some part of the music. They will work with a partner and use a work sheet to document their words and phrases of figurative descriptive language.
2. Provide instructions for the students as they divide into partners:
 - Listen to the recording and follow the map.
 - Together, find the parts of the map where interesting figurative language is used to describe music. Underline these words. (TEACHER NOTE: At this point, you could do a check-in with student pairs to see if they are on track and have found phrases to translate.)
 - Choose one of the underlined phrases or sentences to rewrite in your own words. The goal is to write something interesting that will make readers want to hear the piece. Write it down and be ready to share with the rest of the class.
3. Reconvene and share the new versions as a class. Ask student to provide feedback and also to compare with the original text.
4. Their work can be used for the lesson on [Writing Your Own Program Notes](#).

Figurative Language

Figurative language is the use of words that appeal to the senses and go beyond their actual meaning. They help readers and listeners gain new insights into the objects or subjects in the work. Similes, metaphors, hyperbole, personification, symbolism, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and idiom are all examples of figurative language. Those who write about music – a very intangible thing – like to use figurative language to help listeners connect with musical works.

ASSESSMENT

The written phrases/sentences provide evidence of student understanding and ability to describe and analyze musical elements, characteristics and events as well as skill in responding to and interpreting a music work through text. Assess their work by applying existing class/course rubrics in these areas.

EXTENSIONS

- Display student writing in the classroom or at the concert that includes *Rhythm Stand*, and quote selected phrases in the program.
- Assign students the task of writing a short descriptive paragraph about another musical work from the band repertoire, one of their choosing. Or write a descriptive paragraph about a well-known work by a significant composer.
- Ask students to select a piece of music in their favorite genre or artist and challenge them to use their musical vocabulary plus descriptive language to write about the music.