



## Lesson: Tools of the Trade Composition Project

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### OVERVIEW

Students use related objects to compose an original piece of music.

### LEARNING GOAL

Students will:

1. Discover the various sounds that can be produced from selected related objects.
2. Combine rhythmic sounds produced from the selected objects to create an original percussion piece.
3. Write rhythmic notation using traditional notation or use notation software to notate rhythms.
4. Create a musical score that includes all the traditional conventions (time signature, expression markings, etc.)

### RESOURCES & MATERIALS

1. Assignment Handout.
2. Related objects/tools/utensils.
3. Manuscript paper or access to a computer notation program.

### PROCESS

Students will:

1. Determine the theme of the original piece and find objects related to that theme (e.g. garden tools, workshop tools, grocery items, etc.)
2. Experiment with the various sounds that can be produced with each object.
3. Design a way to describe how the sounds are to be produced by the performers.
4. Use traditional musical notation to document the rhythms each player is to perform.
5. Compose a rhythm piece of a least 8 measures using at least 3 objects/nontraditional instruments using manuscript paper or music notation software.
6. Rehearse and perform the piece.

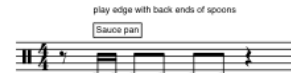
## ASSESSMENT

### Tools of the Trade Rubric

CATEGORY	10	7	5	R - Redo
<b>Music Score</b>	Music Score is very neat and all required elements are included: title, composer name, instrument, clef, time signature, and key signature.	Music score is neat. Two or fewer of the required elements are missing from the musical score.	Music score is legible. Three to four of the required elements are missing from the musical score.	Music Score is illegible and many of the required musical score elements are missing.
<b>Music Notation</b>	All notes are written neatly using proper barline placement.	Most notes are written clearly using the proper barline placement.	Notes are written clearly, but barline placement is often incorrect.	Notes are written in a sloppy and illegible manner. Barline placement is not correct. Needs to be resubmitted.
<b>Meter and Rhythm</b>	All measures have the correct # of beats and a variety of rhythms are used. Including the use of both notes and rests. Beats are clear.	85% of measures have the correct # of beats and a variety of rhythms are used. Including the use of both notes and limited rests. Beats are mostly clear.	70% of the measures have the correct # of beats. Rhythms are very basic and do not expand beyond quarter notes.	Under half of the measures have the correct # of beats. Composition needs to be edited and resubmitted.
<b>Expressive Markings</b>	Includes all of the following: tempo, volume, style, and articulation markings.	Includes some of the following: tempo, volume, style, and articulation markings.	Includes few expressive markings.	Includes no expressive markings.
<b>Targeted Concept(s): Use of Selected Objects</b>	Selected objects for the composition are compatible, logical choices that sound good together.	Selected objects for the composition are compatible, and mostly logical choices, but pose some problems with balance.	Selected objects seem somewhat random and pose numerous problems with compatibility and balance.	Selected objects don't demonstrate an understanding of the criteria for this project.
<b>Assignment Criteria</b>	Includes or exceeds correct minimum number of patterns, instruments, and length of piece.	Includes most criteria.	Includes at least 50% of the criteria.	Piece demonstrate a lack of awareness of criteria.
<b>Musical Effect</b>	Created a cohesive piece that demonstrates consideration of many of the optional items on the checklist.	Created a cohesive piece that demonstrates consideration of a limited number of the optional items on the checklist.	Created a somewhat cohesive piece, but doesn't have much contrast or musical interest and little evidence of consideration of optional items on checklist.	There is little musical connection from one section to the next or evidence of concern for musical effect.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE COMPOSITION PROJECT

Composer James Stephenson used the process for making Chicago deep dish pizza as the inspiration for his band piece *Deep Dish*. The percussion parts for *Deep Dish* require the performers to play with kitchen utensils that can be used for making a pizza as instruments to create unique rhythmic sounds. For instance, the percussionists use cheese graters, garlic presses, vegetable peelers, sauce pans, etc. to play rhythms:



For this project, you will select items that are somehow related, like the utensils in *Deep Dish* were all used in making a pizza. Think of things like tools used for gardening or working in a wood shop. How about tools used to repair a car? Any objects, tools, or utensils that are used in the same activity are what you are looking for. Experiment with the kinds of interesting sounds that can be produced with your selected tools or objects.

Here is an example of a short excerpt from a piece based on the theme “Heavy Construction.” Notice that all the instruments are construction tools – a hammer on wood, a pair of sandpaper blocks, and a ratchet wrench.

### Heavy Construction

Hammer on a piece of wood

*mf*

Rub 2 sandpaper blocks together

*mf*

Turn ratchet on ratchet wrench

*mf*

The score consists of three staves, each in 4/4 time. The first staff, 'Hammer on a piece of wood', has a rhythm of quarter notes. The second staff, 'Rub 2 sandpaper blocks together', has a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff, 'Turn ratchet on ratchet wrench', has a rhythm of quarter notes. All three staves are marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic.

## ASSIGNMENT:

Compose an original percussion ensemble piece using objects/tools/utensils that are related to each other as commonly used in some process (e.g. cooking, building, cleaning, etc.) You may use either music staff paper or music notation software to create your piece.

Your piece must:

- Include parts for at least 3 objects/nontraditional instruments.
- Provide instructions for the performers (i.e. what to use as mallets, how to make sounds with the object, etc.)
- Have a full score.
- Be at least 8 measures long.
- Include critical musical information in the score, such as time signature, dynamics, and expression markings (dynamics, accents, etc.)
- Include individual parts for each instrument/object if the piece is longer than 8 measures or includes more than 3 instruments/objects.

Here are some hints to guide you when you thinking about how to combine sounds to create your piece:

- Try to imagine how your selected objects will sound when played together.
- Be careful of having sounds get too cluttered. You may want to combine longer or slower moving sounds with faster, more active sounds.
- You may want to limit the number of selected objects. A few sounds combined well is better than too many sounds that make the piece sound “cluttered.”
- Try various ways of producing sounds: hitting, blowing, rubbing, shaking.
- Some sounds used may be recordings of things making their own normal sounds (e.g. a blender spinning, clothes tumbling in a dryer, etc.) and combine them with the sounds being performed with the selected objects.
- Be creative! Have fun!