



Lesson: The Pop! Musical Functions Project

OVERVIEW

For this project students will learn about the various musical functions (melody, countermelody, accompaniment, etc.) that are components in a piece of music. They will also consider which function their part represents and apply it to making decisions about how their part should be performed.

LEARNING GOAL

The students will:

1. Identify and understand the various musical functions in a piece.
2. Analyze the functions performed in their individual parts.
3. Apply the understanding and analysis of musical functions in making performance decisions.

NATIONAL STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

Performing: Understanding how structure and context of musical works informs performance.

Anchor Standard #2: Analyze

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- The project handout
- Musical Functions Inventory Sheet (This sheet may be used by students to also analyze and make decisions about other pieces they are rehearsing.)
- Individual parts for *Pop!*

PROCESS

Students will:

1. Read the project handout.
2. Identify and understand the various musical functions in a piece of music.
3. Analyze the functions performed in their individual parts at each rehearsal marking in *Pop!*.
4. Identify other parts in *Pop!* that share the same function.
5. Make decisions about how the part should be performed based on considering the function being fulfilled.
6. Complete the project template.
7. Share and compare the template with other musicians in the group whose part shares the same function.

Note to teacher: To allow time for the students to become comfortable with and confident in their critical listening skills, it would be best to treat this project as a long-term assignment. Each time the piece is rehearsed, the students may specifically listen to one small section (perhaps one rehearsal marking) and then take a couple of minutes to write comments on the Musical Functions Inventory Sheet that they keep in their folders. This will also allow for students to change their minds and edit their work. It may also be helpful for them to have time to

confirm what they thought they heard with their peers (e.g. “At m. 23 it sounded to me like you were playing this same rhythm in your French horn part that I was playing in my alto saxophone part. Were you?”)

ASSESSMENT

A sample rubric is provided as an example of how the project may be assessed.

CATEGORY	10	5	3	R - Redo
Defining Functions	All terminology of functions is used in a way that demonstrates a clear understanding of concepts.	Most terminology of functions is used in a way that demonstrates a clear understanding of concepts.	Use of terminology of functions demonstrates some confusion between concepts.	No demonstration of the ability to discern between the functions of a musical composition.
Identifying Functions	Accurately identified the function(s) being fulfilled in the student's own part throughout the piece.	Accurately identified most of the function(s) being fulfilled in the student's own part throughout the piece, but not all.	Accurately identified some of the function(s) being fulfilled in the student's own part, but numerous errors.	Does not demonstrate an understanding of the musical functions and seemed to be guessing.
Critical Listening	All instruments identified as sharing the same musical functions were correct.	Most instruments identified as sharing the same musical functions were correct.	Instruments identified as sharing the same musical functions many times were not correct.	Instruments identified as sharing the same musical function seemed randomly selected.
Performance Decisions	All performance decisions are all appropriate in consideration of the musical function being fulfilled.	Most, but not all, performance decisions are all appropriate in consideration of the musical function being fulfilled.	Some of the performance decisions are all appropriate in consideration of the musical function being fulfilled, but many were not.	Does not demonstrate an understanding of how considering a musical function can affect how it is performed.

The Pop! Musical Functions Project

When the musicians in your band all play their instruments together, a variety of things may be happening at the same time. Some instruments play the melody. There may also be a secondary melody happening at the same time, known as the countermelody. Harmony may be occurring through some instruments playing rhythmic or sustained chords, referred to as the accompaniment. Melody, countermelody, and accompaniment are all examples of various functions that make up a piece of music.

When musicians perform their various parts in an ensemble, it is important that they are aware of which function is being fulfilled, because it can affect how their parts should be performed. For example, if the accompaniment is louder than the melody, then the audience hears mostly a series of chords rather than the main tune. It is also important that the musicians know what other instruments may share the same function at the same time so that the part is played in a way that is balanced and matches in volume and style.

For this project, you will listen to sections of music in your part in *Pop!* decide what functions are being fulfilled, identify other instruments that share the function, and suggest decisions on how you might perform each section to achieve a performance that demonstrates a high level of balance, precision, and musicality. The various possible functions are listed and defined for you. Please keep in mind that sometimes **a part is fulfilling more than one function at the same time**, for instance a cymbal part may be playing **steady beats**, and also playing occasional louder crashes to **emphasize** accents in the brass section's parts.

Here are the steps:

1. Read the list of functions and definitions.
2. Look at your part for *Pop!* and determine which function is being represented in your part.
3. As you rehearse/perform *Pop!*, listen for and note other instruments that share your function.
4. Record this information on the Musical Functions Inventory Sheet.
5. Suggest how you believe your part and the others that share that function should be performed to best fulfill the function. An example of how to complete the Musical Functions Inventory Sheet is provided below.
6. Share your work with the other musicians whose parts fulfill the same function to see where you agree or disagree about how to perform your parts.
7. **Don't try to complete the Musical Functions Inventory Sheet all at one time!** Every time you rehearse the piece, listen at just one or two rehearsal markings for which other instruments share your part's function. At a convenient time, you may want to ask someone who plays that

instrument, "This is what I play at measure 13. It sounded to me like you have that, too. Do you?"

Musical Functions Inventory Example

Measure Number#	Function (Check any that apply)	Other instruments sharing function	How does it affect how you perform your part
13	☐ Melody ☐ Counter Melody ☐ Accompaniment ☐ Rhythmic Pulse ☒ Add Emphasis ☐ Color	flutes and oboe	Highlight trumpet melody accents. Play in balance with the chord in flutes and oboe and rhythmically line up with trumpet melody accents.

Musical Functions, Definitions, and Examples

Melody	A series of notes that make up the main tune that is the basis for a piece of music (e.g. the tune you sing or hum when you think of your favorite song.)
Counter melody	A tune that is designed to fit with the main melody, but not be as prominent as the main melody that is the basis for the piece of music.
Accompaniment	Harmonies and rhythms that serve as the background and are designed to go with and support the main melody. Many times it will include a bass line and chords and helps to establish the style of a piece of music.
Rhythmic Pulse/Beat	A part designed to emphasize a steady beat for the rest of the instrumental parts (e.g. snare drum part on a march, or repeated staccato quarter note chords in the low brass.)
Add Emphasis	Reinforce and highlight specific notes/chords, or rhythms in other parts (e.g. a cymbal crash on the final loud chord, or playing along with just the accented notes in another instrument's part.)
Add Color	Performing sounds that add another timbre (tone quality) to other parts (e.g. wind chimes to add a twinkling metallic sound, or a trill in a flute part added to a long note in an oboe melody.)

Musical Functions Inventory

Name: _____

Title of Piece: _____

Instrument: _____

Measure Number#	Function (Check any that apply)	Other instruments sharing function	How does it affect how you perform your part
	☐ Melody ☐ Counter Melody ☐ Accompaniment ☐ Color ☐ Rhythmic Pulse ☐ Add Emphasis		
	☐ Melody ☐ Counter Melody ☐ Accompaniment ☐ Color ☐ Rhythmic Pulse ☐ Add Emphasis		
	☐ Melody ☐ Counter Melody ☐ Accompaniment ☐ Color ☐ Rhythmic Pulse ☐ Add Emphasis		
	☐ Melody ☐ Counter Melody ☐ Accompaniment ☐ Color ☐ Rhythmic Pulse ☐ Add Emphasis		

Measure Number#	Function (Check any that apply)	Other instruments sharing function	How it affects how you perform your part
	☐ Melody ☐ Counter Melody ☐ Accompaniment ☐ Color ☐ Rhythmic Pulse ☐ Add Emphasis		
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	☐ Melody ☐ Counter Melody ☐ Accompaniment ☐ Color ☐ Rhythmic Pulse ☐ Add Emphasis		
	☐ Melody ☐ Counter Melody ☐ Accompaniment ☐ Color ☐ Rhythmic Pulse ☐ Add Emphasis		