



What Goes a-Rondo, Comes a-Rondo

INTRODUCTION

Composer Tawnie Olson organized her musical ideas for *Pop!* using a musical form called **rondo**. In this lesson, students will explore, analyze, and define rondo form through listening, moving, and group activities. With the director's guidance, students will identify the landmarks of rondo form in *Pop!*, locating the returning A sections and the contrasting themes and melodies. They will apply their understanding of rondo form to other musical works, analyzing and interpreting rondo form through multiple formats.

The term 'rondo,' sounds like the word round. Rondo form is a circular journey. You leave the opening theme after the beginning, revisit it, and return to it at the close of the piece.

LEARNING GOAL

After an introduction to (or review of) **rondo** form, students will identify the **rondo** form in *Pop!* (with instructor guidance), and analyze other selected pieces in rondo form.

NATIONAL CORE MUSIC STANDARDS

Responding

- Anchor #7: Analyze how the structure and context of varied musical works inform the response
- Anchor #8: Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators'/performers' expressive intent

Connecting:

- Anchor #11: Relate musical ideas and works with varied context to deepen understanding

RESOURCES

- Recording of ["Hosanna" from Jesus Christ Super Star](#)
- Recording of ["The Viennese Musical Clock"](#)
- ["Rondo Explained"](#) video
- Poster paper for documenting student work
- Writing materials for mapping musical form
- Visual image of the [Chateau de Chambord](#)
- [Recording of Pop!](#)

Defining Rondo

Rondo is an Italian word that means 'round.' In music it describes a piece where an important melody keeps returning. It is not like a song with multiple verses because in a rondo the "in between" music keeps changing.

- A rondo uses the main 'A' theme at least **3 times**.
- It has at least **2** contrasting sections.
- Inserting contrasting sections in between the 'A' theme creates symmetrical patterns.

Here are 3 frequently used rondo patterns:

ABACA

ABACABA

ABACADA

PROCESS

Review/Introduce the term

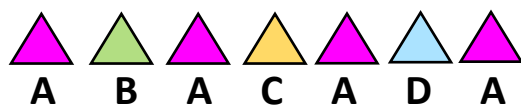
1. Write the word “RONDO” on a large piece of chart paper. Tap into prior knowledge by asking students what they already know about this musical form.
 - Write their initial comments on the chart. Keep it posted.
 - Make a homework assignment: look up the term “rondo in music” and be prepared to report back in **two days**.
2. Two days later, return to the “RONDO” chart and, based on their investigations, add terms, comments, and illustrations. Leave the chart in place as you rehearse *POP!* and refer to it as appropriate
3. Review the practice of tracking sections of a rondo using alphabet letters. View a video that present one version of tracking rondo form in a silly, but correct way.
 - In “[Rondo Form Explained](#),” the creator presents a song about rondo that is a rondo:

Apply

1. Using a clear example of rondo such as “Hosanna” from *Jesus Christ Super Star* (Webber & Rice) or “The Viennese Musical Clock” from the *Hary Janos Suite* (Zoltan Kodaly), to challenge students to a) locate the returning A sections, and b) identify the sections that are not the melody of A. Or select another work in rondo form.
 - Agree on a unified signal all can give when they hear the returning A section.
 - As they listen, encourage them to jot down musical characteristics they notice about the themes and the order in which they flow. The form of the piece is **intro ABACADA**.
2. Discuss what they noticed. Introduce or review the use of alphabet letters as way to track what happens as a piece unfolds. Listen again and challenge them to chart the form using alphabet letters. (intro A B A C A D A)

Visualize Rondo Form

Write a collective definition of rondo form. Then use illustrations or diagrams that visually capture rondo. Be clear that **there are multiple variations in the form**; the clue is the return of the A section with contrasting sections in between. Other rondo plans include ABACA, ABACABA.



1. Ask students to create an original map of “The Viennese Musical Clock,” diagraming its rondo form using letters, but also illustrations, shapes, cartoons, color, etc.
2. Look beyond music and challenge students to find objects, artworks, buildings, or other visual examples of rondo. Encourage them to bring a photo to class and post it on the Rondo Chart.

3. View this image of a famous chateau in the Loire Valley in France, the Château de Chambord. Ask students to speculate about why they are looking at a photo of a building that is not related to *Pop!*.
- Encourage a discussion about the form of the building.
 - In pairs, students can analyze the form using alphabet letters.
 - Share some information about the structure:

It was ordered by King Francis the 1st of France, to be used as a hunting lodge. Its' other purpose was to be a huge symbols of French wealth and power. It took 28 years to construct (1519-1547); since this is a rather long period of time, the building blends French medieval and Renaissance architectural traditions.



Northwest façade of the Chateau de Chambord

Identify the Rondo Form in *Pop!*

Find the rondo landmarks in *Pop!* with students. Hearing Olsen's unique variations of the themes can be a challenge, but the basic melody is always somewhere inside the repeated sections.

- The recurring **A theme**/main theme of *Pop!* is first heard at Letter A (mm. 9 through 15); restated and varied through m. 23.
- A new **B theme** introduced at Letter B (m. 24); a more sustained melody.
- A variation of **A** returns at Letter C (m. 36). It continues at Letter D.
- Letter E might first sound like a variation of the **B theme** (m. 59), but as it continues at Letter F, multiple alternations transform it into the new **section C**.
- Letter G (m. 89) has a fragmented **A** melody.
- Letter H (m.106), melodies derived from the **B** motives return.
- A short version of **A** at Letter I (m. 118) that is similar Letter D brings the rondo back to A. The improvised musical Popcorn section, Letter K, follows the last echoes of A (m. 146).

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Ask students to write their own definition of Rondo form in words, including illustrations or graphics.

EXTENSIONS

1. Analyze other Pieces for Rondo Form

Students can apply what they know about rondo to other works. They can use diagrams, letters, illustrations or all three to visually present the form. Here are a few rondos from a variety of composers.

- **"Hosanna"** from *Jesus Christ Super Star* (ABACA)
- **"Every Breath You Take"** by The Police (ABAC (instrumental break) BA Coda)

- [“Viennese Musical Clock,”](#) from Kodaly’s *Hary Janos* (ABACABA),
 - Mozart: [Horn Concerto No. 4 in E-flat major, K. 495, III. Rondo \(third movement\)](#) (ABACABA)
 - [“March or the Siamese Children”](#) from *King and I*
 - Jean-Joseph Mouret: [Suite de Symphonies, “Fanfare-Rondeau”](#)
 - Mozart, [Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, 4th Mvt.](#) (with string quartet)
 - Ludwig Van Beethoven, [“Für Elise”](#) (ABAC transition A)
2. Write a Rondo Poem
 3. Create a movement piece for an existing rondo
 4. Create spoken word rondo with a unifying theme. For example, a “Healthy Favorite Foods” rondo.
 5. Find more visual rondos in nature, your community, or in visual works of art. Snap a photo with your phone and share in class.

Additional Resources

[This video](#) is a detailed explanation of rondo, with multiple examples and illustrations.