LESSON 1
Creating a Playlist
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**SUMMARY**
In this lesson, students will experiment with different approaches for curating a playlist using free online technology tools. Students will examine the connection between creating playlists and the development of concert programs, such as the program for Beethoven's Birthday. Students will also reflect upon how the ways in which we consume music has evolved since Beethoven's lifetime and its societal impacts.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE**
Students will use one of the free online platforms to curate a playlist, which will include a minimum of 15 pieces selected for a specific purpose (e.g. for an event or activity, to evoke a particular emotion, to create a certain atmosphere, to communicate a message).

*source: slant.co/topics/7974/-online-platforms-to-make-music-playlists

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COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS

GRADE 3
Colorado Academic Standards in Music: Grade Level Expectation
Standard 4. Aesthetic Valuation of Music
Grade Level Expectation:
1. Select and use specific criteria in making judgments about the quality of a musical performance.
2020 Colorado Academic Standards // Grade Level Expectation: Reading, Writing and Communicating
Oral Expression and Listening
1. Participate cooperatively in group activities.
2. Communicate using appropriate language in informal and formal situations.

GRADE 4
Colorado Academic Standards in Music: Grade Level Expectation
Standard 4. Aesthetic Valuation of Music
Grade Level Expectation:
1. Discriminate between musical and nonmusical factors in creating criteria for evaluating music.
2020 Colorado Academic Standards // Grade Level Expectation: Reading, Writing and Communicating
Oral Expression and Listening
1. Pose thoughtful questions after carefully listening to others.
2. Create a plan to effectively present information both informally and formally.

GRADE 5
Colorado Academic Standards in Music: Grade Level Expectation
Standard 4. Aesthetic Valuation of Music
Grade Level Expectation:
1. Create and use specific criteria in making judgments about the quality of a musical performance.
2020 Colorado Academic Standards // Grade Level Expectation: Reading, Writing and Communicating
Oral Expression and Listening
1. Collaborate in discussions that serve various purposes and address various situations.
2. Present to express an opinion, persuade, or explain/provide information.
LESSON CONNECTIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
■ Students will use one of the free online platforms to curate a playlist, which will include a minimum of 15 pieces selected for a specific purpose (e.g. for an event or activity, to evoke a particular emotion, to create a certain atmosphere, to communicate a message).

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
■ How has the way we listen to music changed?
■ What is the difference between actively and passively listening to music?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS
■ Since online streaming of playlists has become the dominant format for listening to music, there has been a shift from content-based listening to context-based listening.
■ Listening is a process in which the listener may either be active and intellectually engaged, or passive and intellectually disengaged.

VOCABULARY
Content-based playlist  Context-based playlist  Curate  Genre
Perspective  Sequence  Stigma  Subconscious

VOCABULARY FROM OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS
Democratization  Empathy  Ensemble  Multilingual

MATERIALS & RESOURCES
■ Devices with Internet access
■ What are the best online platforms to make music playlists?
  source: slant.co/topics/7974/~online-platforms-to-make-music-playlists
■ Behind the Cello by Yo-Yo Ma
  source: huffpost.com/entry/behind-the-cello_b_4603748

GUIDING & EXTENSION QUESTIONS
■ What is a genre? Provide two examples.
■ Did Beethoven's music belong exclusively to one genre? Explain.
■ How have digital streaming services brought about a seismic shift in the way music is distributed and shared?
■ Has exposure to a wide range of music through streaming services increased our willingness to listen to different musical styles and expand our musical tastes?
■ Before streaming, how did the cost of purchasing music recorded on a vinyl record, cassette, or CD create a barrier to gaining greater exposure to many different styles of music? How did streaming increase our access to a wider range of music?
■ Why do playlists tend to be more context rather than content-based?
■ How do we consume music both consciously and subconsciously? Provide two examples of situations in which we subconsciously listen to music. In what ways could this subconscious listening influence our perception and/or actions?
■ If Beethoven were alive today, which pieces might be on his playlist? Why?
■ How do you think the pieces for the Colorado Symphony Beethoven's Birthday Bash concert were chosen? What would you keep the same? How might you change the program? Why?
LESSON CONNECTIONS

- What could be learned about a particular culture from listening to playlists from that culture?
- What is the purpose of music?
- How does music enrich your life?
- What affects your initial reaction to a piece of music?
- How does your initial reaction to a piece of music affect your overall opinion of it?
- Why might it be worthwhile to listen to a piece you initially disliked more than once?
- Which events, activities, and celebrations do you associate with music?
- What do you predict the musical landscape will look and sound like 50 years from now? Why?

5TH GRADE EXTENSION QUESTIONS

FOR STUDENTS TO RESEARCH:

- How has the introduction of online streaming services disrupted the music industry?
- How has streaming music contributed to the democratization of music?
- In what ways did Beethoven contribute to the democratization of music during his lifetime?

1. CONNECTION

Anyone under the age of twenty (that’s you!) has not experienced the patience and perseverance required to create a mix-tape of their
favorite songs from the radio. There was the adrenaline rush of finally recording your favorite song after having waited hours for it to be aired on the radio. There was the angst of missing your opportunity due to an unavoidable bathroom break, or a landline phone ringing in the background that ruined your recording. In the 80s and 90s, giving your best friend a mix tape was truly a labor of love.

Before music was instantly accessible through online streaming services, making a playlist was a painstaking, time intensive undertaking. Today, there are countless playlists accessible at anytime with an Internet connection. (e.g. The streaming service Spotify has more than 2 billion playlists!)

II. TEACH

Storytelling is both central and essential to all human cultures. Stories provide us with a structure to more easily grapple with and work towards gaining an understanding of who we are in time and place and our relationship to other people and events. Stories are not only transmitted through words, pictures, or movement, but also through music.

By creating a playlist, you have the opportunity to create a narrative. A playlist can serve as a storytelling tool in the same way as a concert’s program, or selection of pieces. These musical works may be selected and sequenced with the purpose of communicating a certain emotion or message.

For example, the program, or “playlist,” for Beethoven’s Birthday Bash was curated to not only include two of Beethoven’s most celebrated symphonic works (his Fifth and Ninth Symphonies), but also to feature composers who all deeply admired Beethoven’s work and contributions to humanity. Additionally, with the exception of Kevin Puts and John Williams, all of the composers either lived during the Classical (~1730-1820) or Romantic period (1830-1900).

III. DEMONSTRATION

Conduct a think aloud to model the steps to curate a playlist. Before presenting this lesson, prepare a playlist with a specific theme or purpose. Ask students to infer the theme or purpose of your playlist before sharing it. Then, have students determine whether you created a content or context-based playlist. Finally, have students suggest and vote on an appropriate title for your playlist.

Explain that there is an art to curating a playlist. Several things to consider when developing a playlist include:

■ Having a theme or purpose (e.g. Civil Rights songs that promote freedom and justice, party tunes, holidays around the world, etc.)
■ Number of songs (Many playlists aim for approximately 30-50 songs, but for this assignment students are tasked with including a minimum of 15 songs)
■ Structure or sequence of songs
■ Creativity (Experiment with a wide range of genres, artists, and sounds. Students will want to be strategic in creating a balanced playlist. This may mean choosing only one song per artist, including songs that present a variety of sounds, and/or songs that vary in length.)
■ How songs relate to one another (e.g. How does one song respond to another song on the playlist?)
■ Create an appropriate playlist title
IV. ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT
Have students brainstorm and identify the purpose of their playlist with a partner.

V. INDEPENDENT OR SMALL GROUP WORK
Have students work independently, or in pairs, to create a playlist with their defined purpose.

VI. SHARE
Have students share their playlists in small groups. One option is to have students infer the intended theme or purpose of their classmates’ playlists before the title of the playlist is shared.

VII. LINK
Playlists are no longer just a tool for radio DJs to organize their music. Playlists have become one of the main modern tools used to discover, listen to, promote, and market music. Playlists provide an opportunity to tell a story, listen to music from across the globe, relax and reflect, or to have a shared experience with others. When you attend a live performance, you gain the added benefit of having a shared experience not only with other listeners, but also with the artists. It is a truly communal experience.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER TIPS

- Cooperative group work helps ELLs develop their learning skills as each student has more opportunities to speak in a smaller, more intimate setting. It is especially important for ELLs to understand their assigned role in a partnership or group. It is also critical to clarify content-specific vocabulary beforehand. Providing ELLs with a list of prompts to which they may refer during group and whole class discussions will help them deepen their connection to both their peers and the English language. If possible, the prompts should be given in both English and students’ home language.

- Source of prompts and responses to ELLs in a variety of contexts:
  readingrockets.org/article/extending-english-language-learners-classroom-interactions-using-response-protocol

Possible prompts for accountable talk around developing a playlist:

**Restating**
- What I understood you say is…
- Do you mean that…?
- In other words, you think…

**Agreeing**
- I agree with ________’s suggestion because…
- ________’s point about…is important because…

**Disagreeing**
- I respect your opinion, but I think differently because…
- My opinion is different from yours because…

**Asking a clarifying question**
- Could you explain it in a different way because I was confused when…?
- Could you please repeat what you said?
- Could you give me an example to clarify?
- In other words, you think…

**Adding to an idea**
- I would like to add that…
- What would happen if…
- I understand what you are saying, but have you considered…?
- From my perspective/In my opinion…

**Making connections between ideas**
- When ________ shared…, it reminded me of…
- I see a connection between what ________ said and what ________ said. The connection is…
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Puttng the Lesson Into Practice

Additional Resources

Spotify: The rise of the contextual playlist
- blog.chartmetric.io/spotify-the-rise-of-the-contextual-playlist-c6f3c26900f4
- Thursday Tip-Off: Making a Mixtape
  blog.urbanoutfitters.com/blog/thursday_tip-off_making_a_mixtape
- What are the best online platforms to make music playlists?
  slant.co/topics/7974/-/online-platforms-to-make-music-playlists
- Yo-Yo Ma’s Silkroad Ensemble’s A Playlist Without Borders:
  youtube.com/watch?v=yyjufuJFYbo&list=PL6kdHJwOdKVs3LXB4yDyT_x6bMISe4xYY
- Primephonic
  primephonic.com/about-primephonic
- The 39 Apartments of Ludwig van Beethoven by Jonah Winter & Barry Blitt (humorous story to share during the read aloud portion of your literacy block)

Teacher Resources

- Using Playlists to Personalize Learning
  literacyworldwide.org/blog%2Fliteracy-daily%2F2018%2F06%2F08%2Fusing-playlists-to-personalize-learning

Home Practice

Challenge students to create another playlist that communicates a social or political message that is personally meaningful. Have students share their playlists in small groups so that their classmates can postulate what message is trying to be conveyed to the listener.

Optional 5th Grade Extension #1

Share excerpts from Yo-Yo Ma’s Silkroad Ensemble’s A Playlist Without Borders:
  youtube.com/watch?v=yyjufuJFYbo&list=PL6kdHJwOdKVs3LXB4yDyT_x6bMISe4xYY
- How does the Silkroad Ensemble use the pieces on their album to connect people from across the globe?
- How could this playlist promote a thoughtful class dialogue about what makes certain styles of music personally meaningful?
- How might having an open mind to new musical experiences help you become musically “multilingual”?
- What is the value of musical multilingualism?
- How might new musical experiences make you more curious about and empathetic towards other cultures?