

Postcard Home

Fourth Grade + ELA and Music
Adapted by Cristi Clark

CORE SUBJECT AREA

ELA

ART FORM + ELEMENTS

Music

Rhythm

Expression

Style

MSCCR STANDARDS

W.4.4

W.4.10

L.4.1

L.4.1f

L.4.3

L.4.3a

L.4.3c

L.4.6

MSCCR CREATIVE ARTS STANDARDS

MU: Re7.2.4a: Demonstrate and explain how responses to music are informed by the structure, the use of the elements of music, and context.

MU: Cn11.0.4a: Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and other arts, disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

WEBSITES: Stormy Weather Gift of the Indus: [The Arts and Culture of Pakistan: Music Xploring Xtremes Interactive](#); The Concert Program

Mobile App: Postcard Creator The Postcard Creator walks students through the full production of a postcard.

Student interactive: URL <http://www.readwritethink.org/les/resources/interactives/postcard/>

LESSON SEQUENCE

SESSION 1: MUSIC AND SENTENCE COMBINING

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to close their eyes and think about what it is like during a thunderstorm. Prompt them for words and phrases that they associate with a thunderstorm, such as loud, booming, flashes of lightning, windy, drenching, leaves blowing. Record students' responses on the board or chart paper.

2. Access the “Stormy Weather” website, and have students close their eyes again and listen to Summer by

DURATION

1.5 Hours

VOCABULARY

Postcard, tone, relevant, audience

OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, music is an inspirational prompt for writing. After listening to a song, students write simple sentences describing the music and their thoughts about the music. Then they use sentence combining to write more interesting and complex sentences. This strategy involves peer collaboration and an opportunity for students to practice manipulating words and sentences to improve their writing. They publish their musical responses using an interactive, online Postcard Creator to send to a family member or friend.

MATERIALS NEEDED

A CD or tape of a concert of your choice

CD or tape player

Computers with Internet access

Overhead projector and transparencies

Paper, pencil, and art supplies

PRINTOUTS:

Sentence Combining and Postcard Project Rubric

Postcard Planning Sheet

Antonio Vivaldi, which is an orchestrated piece that hints at the coming of a summer thunderstorm. After playing the song, ask students how the song made them feel. What was the mood? What did it make them think of? Based on the song, ask students to generate additional words and phrases for the list started in Step 1.

3. Model for students how you would write a few simple sentences in response to the music using words from the list. The storm came fast. The storm was powerful. It blew around leaves. The rain was drenching. My friends and I had to run inside my house.

4. Play the music again while students write six or seven simple sentences in response to the song on a piece of paper. After about 5 to 10 minutes, ask for a few volunteers to share their sentences with the class.

5. Begin to model orally how you would combine the sentences you wrote to make them sound better and be more interesting. Explain your thought process as you are combining sentences to show how you are trying out different alternatives before settling on the sentence that sounds the best. The powerful storm came fast and blew around the leaves in my yard. Model a few additional examples of sentence combining using either your own sentences or sentences from a few students in the class.

6. Pair students to work together to combine the sentences that they wrote. Be sure to encourage students to play around with different possible sentence combinations and to discuss them together. There is no right or wrong answer. Circulate around the room while students are working to be sure they are on task and to help those who are struggling. Focus less on formal grammar rules and more on helping students determine which sentences sound the best.

7. Close the sessions by asking a few students to share their sentence combinations and to explain how they arrived at their responses.

SESSION 2: AUDIENCE AND POSTCARD PREPARATION

1. Play the Vivaldi song again, this time asking students to pretend that they are hearing it while at a concert. Have them review the combined sentences they wrote in Session 1, Step 6, making any changes they would like after hearing the song again.

2. Tell students that, in this session, they will be writing a postcard about the "concert" to send to a family member or friend. Ask each student to select someone to write a postcard to.

3. Review and discuss how writing can change depending on the audience. Think aloud about how a postcard to your grandma might sound different from a postcard to your best friend. Model how you would revise and personalize the sentences you wrote in Session 1 to fit the person you select for your postcard. Continue to emphasize the strategy of sentence combining to turn simple sentences into more interesting ones. Dear



Grandma,

I know how much you dislike thunderstorms, but the concert I heard today was so interesting! The music reminded me of a powerful storm that blows around all the leaves in my yard. It was fast and exciting, just like when the drenching rain starts, my friends and I have to run inside my house.

4. Give students time to revise and personalize their sentences to fit with the person they selected to receive their postcard. Circulate while students are working to help those who are struggling with the concept of audience.

5. Introduce and pass out the Postcard Planning Sheet. Demonstrate how you would fill out this sheet using the information for the postcard you have been modeling. Have students fill in each section, explaining that they can make up an address for the person if they don't know what it is. The body section should be the personalized message about the concert. For the image section, have students describe an illustration that fits the music that they heard and what they wrote about in the body of the postcard. Review each student's planning sheet to offer suggestions and revisions before ending the session.

SESSION 3: POSTCARD CREATION

1. Take students to the computer lab, and have them transfer the planning sheet information to the postcard using the online Postcard Creator. To facilitate this activity, pair at-risk students, English-language learners, and students who are unfamiliar with computers with students who are more fluent in reading, writing, and computer use. Have students print their postcards and then draw the illustration, as described on their planning sheets, on the front to match the postcard message

2. End the session by having students share their illustrated postcards with the class. Be sure to have students send (in a regular envelope) or give their postcards to the friend or family member they wrote to.

EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Extend the lesson by adding a peer-review session. Have students sit knee to knee and read their sentences to each other. Instruct students to give positive feedback. Also, have students give one example of another good sentence that could be used.

Using other songs repeat this activity on a regular basis at the start of class. Have students listen to a song as they enter and then write and combine sentences to keep in their journals. Invite students to bring in their favorite music to use as the writing prompt, being sure to provide guidelines as to the type of music that is acceptable per your school's policy.

Integrate this approach with other content area topics by choosing a song that fits a theme (e.g., rainforests) and having students write sentences to describe what they hear in the music, what it reminds them of or sounds like. Tie this writing in with what they are reading and learning about in class.



SOURCES

Lesson created by Dustin Dotzler (readwritethink.org) Lesson edited and updated by Cristi Clark

TIPS + FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

STUDENT ASSESSMENT/REFLECTIONS

Informally observe students' efforts with their writing. Offer suggestions that can help students create more varied and interesting sentences. Use a checklist to keep a list of students who are catching on well and those who need more practice.

Formally evaluate students' work throughout the lesson activities by using the Sentence Combining and Postcard Project Rubric. Identify the level at which students followed the instructions and mark on the rubric for their grade.

