

SONGWRITING 101:

An Introduction to Words & Music

Grades 1-2

INTRODUCTION

The following lessons are helpful in preparing students for Songwriting 101. Songwriting 101 teaches students the basics of songwriting, including song form and vocabulary, and establishes songwriting as a creative outlet to explore and process emotions, capture experiences, share stories, and express individuality. The program can be used to strengthen skills learned in traditional language arts units, promote social and emotional learning, and provide an interactive and collaborative writing experience with a professional songwriter.

We recommend teaching this 30-minute lesson three or four days before the songwriter workshop to ensure song ideas are fresh in the minds of the students. The pre-lesson encourages thinking about what students already know about songwriting, while teaching them about the specific parts of a song. Completing the pre-lesson ensures that the Songwriting 101 workshop with a professional songwriter will be a productive co-writing experience. The post-lesson reinforces what students learned and allows them to reflect on the songwriting experience.

The Teacher Resource Portal provides materials for Songwriting 101 including song lyrics for classroom projection, music videos, songwriter biographies, and more. In addition to Songwriting 101 materials, the Portal includes lesson guides, tool kits, and other primary sources that bring the museum into your classroom. To access the Teacher Resource Portal, visit CountryMusicHallofFame.org/Education/Teacher-Resource-Portal/.

Songwriting 101 is a precursor to Words & Music, the museum's flagship education program. A rigorous step-by-step lyric writing experience, Words & Music supports standards in English language arts, music, and social and emotional learning, and culminates with an interactive performance by a professional songwriter who presents student lyrics as finished songs. For more information on Words & Music, visit CountryMusicHallofFame.org/Education/WordsandMusic/.



Johnny Cash



Dolly Parton



Charley Pride

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2

Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3

Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.4

Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.4

Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
MUSIC EDUCATION STANDARDS

Standard 6

Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.

Standard 7

Evaluating music and music performances.

Standard 8

Students will understand relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.

TENNESSEE MUSIC STANDARDS

Foundation R1

Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Foundation R2

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Foundation Cn1

Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to artistic endeavors.

Foundation Cn2

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS ANCHOR STANDARDS

Anchor Standard #1

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard #2

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard #3

Refine and complete artistic work.

Anchor Standard #4

Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation.

Anchor Standard #5

Develop and refine artistic work for presentation.

Anchor Standard #6

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Anchor Standard #7

Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard #8

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING INDICATORS

1A. Demonstrate an awareness of my emotions.

1B. Demonstrate an awareness of my personal qualities and interests.

2A. Understand and use strategies for managing my emotions and behaviors constructively.

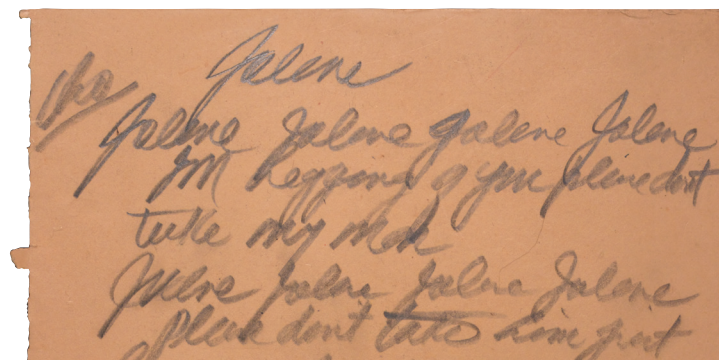
3A. Demonstrate awareness and consideration of other people's emotions, perspectives, and social cues.

3C. Demonstrate an awareness and respect for human dignity, including culture and differences.

4A. Use positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.

4B. Develop and maintain positive relationships.

5A. Consider and use multiple factors in decision-making, including ethical and safety factors, personal and community responsibilities, and short-term and long-term goals.



Dolly Parton's original "Jolene" manuscripts, 1973–1974

Pre-Lesson: Introduction to Songwriting

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn and review five primary parts of a song.
- Students will analyze song lyrics and demonstrate their understanding of parts of a song and rhyming words.
- Students will use visual representations to brainstorm song ideas and prepare to choose a song topic as a class with the Songwriting 101 songwriter.

PREPARATION

Vist the Teacher Resource Portal to access supplemental videos and teaching tools.

Display the **Parts of a Song Vocabulary Sheet**.

Provide a blank piece of paper for each student, along with crayons or markers for the song brainstorming activity.

Select a song to use for the lesson based on your students' interests and grade level. Suggested songs for this unit include the following:

- "Home on the Range," written by Daniel E. Kelley and Brewster M. Higley, recorded by Roy Rogers and others.
- "I'm Just Me," written by Glenn Martin and recorded by Charley Pride.
- "I Will Always Love You," written and recorded by Dolly Parton.
- "Keep on the Sunny Side," written by Ada Blenkhorn and J. Howard Entwisle and recorded by the Carter Family.

Song lyrics and audio recordings are available in the Teacher Resource Portal. Copy song lyrics for each student and locate a recording of the selected song to play for the class.

PRE-LESSON

20–30 MINUTES

1. Lead a class discussion with students.

Ask students to name some of their favorite songs and what they like about the songs. Notate the discussion as it occurs. Encourage the conversation until the list of songs represents a range of musical genres.

2. Review the parts of a song. Ask students to name as many parts of a song as they can and see if they can define them correctly. Once several students have shared, display the **Parts of a Song Vocabulary Sheet** and go over these five main parts of a song.

- The **title** is the name of the song.
- The **theme** is the message, or what the song is about.
- The **chorus** is the part of the song that repeats.
- The **verse** explains the story or theme of the song with details.
- **Rhyming words** have the same ending sound with either the exact same ending letters or the same vowel sound. Example: cat and hat or sound and down.

3. Analyze song lyrics with students. Choose a song from the Teacher Resource Portal to analyze and display the lyric sheet for the class to see. Play the song once and help the students follow along with the lyrics. Ask the students if they can find the title of the song. Play the song again, and ask the students to raise their hands when they hear the **chorus** of the song, then put their hands back down when they hear a **verse**.

4. Discuss theme. Reiterate that the **theme** is what the song is about. For example, the theme of "Home on the Range" is home and the beauty of the American countryside. Go back to the song you have been analyzing, and identify the theme. Repeat steps 3 and 4 with additional songs, if time allows.

Student answers should include but are not limited to the following:

- "I'm Just Me" is about being happy with who you are and what you have.
- "I Will Always Love You" is about saying goodbye to a loved one.
- "Keep on the Sunny Side" is about staying strong though tough times.

5. Song theme brainstorm. Explain that brainstorming is when you come up with lots of different ideas all at once. The songwriter will use this method to come up with a song theme for the class. Have each student spend 5–7 minutes drawing out an idea for a song theme on their piece of paper. They can either come up with as many ideas as possible in the allotted time, or add details to one song theme in particular. Remind them that there are no bad ideas, and that a song can be written about anything.

Encourage students to:

- Draw anything that is on their minds.
- Focus on drawing the entire time.
- Include as many details as possible.

Give the students a few examples for guidance.

- A student may choose to write a song about his/her friend. Encourage the student to draw a picture of their friend with specific details.
- A student may choose to write a song about his/her pet. The student should draw a detailed picture of that pet with several descriptive details.
- A student may choose to write a song about ice cream. They should draw a picture of their favorite ice cream with their favorite toppings.

TEACHER TIP:

Take note of any ideas that are particularly popular with your class. Keep them in mind for the session with the professional songwriter.

Allow several students to explain their pictures, sharing their song ideas with the class. If they are able, have students write out their song title at the top of their page. If they have multiple ideas on their page, have them label each idea with a song title.

6. Prepare students for the Songwriting 101 session.

Let students know that the songwriter will collaborate with the class on the song theme, the style of music, and other aspects of songwriting.

Students should prepare questions to ask the songwriter at the end of the program. As a class, discuss some questions the students would like to ask the songwriter during their workshop.

TEACHER TIP:

We suggest writing down a few of the students' questions and collecting their drawings to share during the songwriter workshop.



Post-Lesson: Song Topic and Outline

POST-LESSON

5–10 MINUTES

1. Lead a class discussion on the following questions to reflect on their songwriting experience and the songwriting workshop.

- What did you learn about songwriting?
- What did you enjoy about writing a song?
- How did writing a song make you feel?
- What do you think makes a good song?
- Do you think all songwriters are famous? Explain your answer.
- Would you rather be a songwriter, a singer, or both? Explain your answer.



WORDS & MUSIC FUNDERS



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Lyric Sheet

Home on the Range

Brewster M. Higley / Daniel E. Kelley

Oh give me a home, where the buffalo roam
Where the deer and the antelope play
Where seldom is heard, a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day

Home, home on the range
Where the deer and the antelope play
Where seldom is heard, a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day

Where the air is so pure and the zephyrs so free
And the breezes so balmy and light
That I would not exchange my home on the range
For all of the cities so bright

Home, home on the range
Where the deer and the antelope play
Where seldom is heard, a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

How often at night when the heavens are bright
With the light of the glittering stars
I stand there amazed and I ask as I gaze,
Does their glory exceed that of ours?

Home, home on the range
Where the deer and the antelope play
Where seldom is heard, a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day

Lyric Sheet**I'm Just Me***Glenn Martin*

Down at the railroad station there's people gettin' on
Some are a goin' north some are a goin' south, I'm just goin' to be gone
Some people are born to be takers, others just want to give
Some people live just to love but I just love to live

For I was just born to be exactly what you see
Nothing more or less, I'm not the worst or the best
I just try to be exactly what you see
Today and every day, I'm just me

When people say their life is rough, I wonder compared to what
Some are wantin' more and more's gettin' less, I just want what I've got
Some want to live on a hill, others down by the sea
Some want to live inside high walls, I just want to live free

For I was just born to be exactly what you see
Nothing more or less I'm not the worst or the best
I just try to be exactly what you see
Today and every day, I'm just me

For I was just born to be exactly what you see
Today and every day, I'm just me

Lyric Sheet

I Will Always Love You

Dolly Parton

If I should stay
I would only be in your way
So I'll go but I know
I'll think of you each step of the way

And I will always love you
I will always love you

Bittersweet memories
That is all I'm taking with me
Goodbye, please don't cry
We both know I'm not what you need

But I will always love you
I will always love you

I hope life treats you kind
And I hope you have all you've dreamed of
And I wish you joy and happiness
But above all this I wish you love

And I will always love you
I will always love you
I will always love you
I will always love you
I will always love you
I, I will always love you

Lyric Sheet

Keep on the Sunny Side

Ada Blenkhorn / J. Howard Entwisle

There's a dark and a troubled side of life
There's a bright and a sunny side, too
Though we meet with the darkness and strife
The sunny side we also may view

Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side
Keep on the sunny side of life
It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way
If we'll keep on the sunny side of life

The storm and its fury broke today
Crushing hopes that we cherished so dear
Clouds and storm will in time pass away
The sun again will shine bright and clear

Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side
Keep on the sunny side of life
It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way
If we'll keep on the sunny side of life

Let us greet with a song of hope each day
Though the moment be cloudy or fair
Let us trust in our Savior always
To keep us every one in his care

Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side
Keep on the sunny side of life
It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way
If we'll keep on the sunny side of life