

## Story Song Mini-Lesson • Lessons 2 and/or 8

### OBJECTIVES

Students will analyze two story songs and apply their knowledge to writing one.

### STANDARDS

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1**

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2**

### PREPARATION

- Make copies of “**Coat of Many Colors**” and “**Check Yes or No**” **Lyric Sheets** and the **Story Song Template** (optional).
- Locate audio or video versions of “Coat of Many Colors” performed by Dolly Parton and “Check Yes or No” performed by George Strait.
- Students should have a working knowledge of the terms “theme” and “plot.”

### ACTIVITY

1. Share with students:

Among many types of songs, one popular form is the story song. In story songs, a songwriter crafts a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end.

2. Distribute “**Coat of Many Colors**” **Lyric Sheet** and listen to the song. Ask students to discuss the following questions in small groups, then discuss as a class:

- What is the main point or the moral of the story? Cite evidence from the text to support your opinions.
- What are the main points in the plot of the story?
- The lyrics of this song do not tell only the plot of the story—that would make for a boring song! How does Parton tell the story in a way that paints a picture? Cite evidence from the text to support your opinions.

3. Distribute “**Check Yes or No**” **Lyric Sheet** and listen to the song. Ask students to discuss the following questions in small groups, then discuss as a class:

- What are the main points in the plot of “Check Yes or No”? Cite evidence from the text to support your answers.
- How were these plot points organized to tell the story?
- What parts of the song tell the story?
- What parts of the song communicate the theme?
- What about the lines of the song that are not telling a story? What purpose do they serve?

**Note:** The following concepts should have emerged in the discussion. If not, share them with students:

- The verses usually contain the main plot points.
- The first verse usually conveys the beginning of the story, the second verse the middle, and the third verse the end.
- The theme of the story is usually communicated in the chorus.

4. Share the following journal prompt with students. After this activity, you may wish to distribute the **Story Song Template** for further explanation.

Think of a story that you could turn into a song. This could be from your memory, from your imagination, from history, or from another work of art like a book or a movie. Write the basic plot points of the story in three parts: the beginning, middle, and end. Next, write one sentence describing the theme of this story.

## LYRIC SHEET

**Coat of Many Colors***Dolly Parton*

Back through the years  
I go wand'ring once again  
Back to the seasons of my youth  
I recall a box of rags that someone  
gave us  
And how my mama put the rags to  
use.

There were rags of many colors  
Every piece was small  
And I didn't have a coat  
And it was way down in the fall  
Mama sewed the rags together  
Sewing every piece with love  
She made my coat of many colors  
That I was so proud of.

As she sewed, she told a story  
From the Bible, she had read  
About a coat of many colors,  
Joseph wore and then she said  
Perhaps this coat will bring you  
Good luck and happiness  
And I just couldn't wait to wear it  
And mama blessed it with a kiss.

My coat of many colors  
That my mama made for me,  
Made only from rags  
But I wore it so proudly.  
Although we had no money  
I was rich as I could be  
In my coat of many colors  
My mama made for me.

So with patches on my britches  
And holes in both my shoes  
In my coat of many colors  
I hurried off to school  
Just to find the others laughing  
And making fun of me  
In my coat of many colors  
My mama made for me.

And oh I couldn't understand it  
For I felt I was rich  
And I told 'em of the love  
My mama sewed in every stitch  
And I told 'em all the story  
Mama told me while she sewed  
And how my coat of many colors  
Was worth more than all their clothes.

But they didn't understand it  
And I tried to make them see  
That one is only poor  
Only if they choose to be  
Now I know we had no money  
But I was rich as I could be  
In my coat of many colors  
My mama made for me  
Made just for me.



*Dolly Parton wrote "Coat of Many Colors" about a humble jacket that was sewn by her mother because her family couldn't afford a new one. Parton says it is her favorite of the many songs she has written.*

## LYRIC SHEET

**Check Yes or No***Dana Oglesby/Danny Wells*

It started way back in third grade  
I used to sit beside Emmylou Hayes  
A pink dress, a matching bow and her ponytail  
She kissed me on the school bus, but told me not to tell

Next day I chased her 'round the playground  
Across the monkey bars, to the merry-go-round  
And Emmylou got caught passing me a note  
Before the teacher took it, I read what she wrote,

“Do you love me, do you wanna be my friend?  
And if you do, well then don't be afraid to take me by the hand  
If you want to, I think this is how love goes  
Check yes or no.”

Now we're grown up and she's my wife  
Still like two kids with stars in our eyes  
Ain't much changed, I still chase Emmylou  
Up and down the hall, around the bed in our room

Last night I took her out in a white limousine  
Twenty years together, she still gets to me  
Can't believe it's been that long ago  
When we got started with just a little note,

“Do you love me, do you wanna be my friend?  
And if you do, well then don't be afraid to take me by the hand  
If you want to, I think this is how love goes  
Check yes or no.”

“Do you love me, do you wanna be my friend?  
And if you do, well then don't be afraid to take me by the hand  
If you want to, I think this is how love goes  
Check yes or no.”

Check yes or no  
Check yes or no  
Check yes or no  
Check yes or no

## HANDOUT

**Story Song Template • Lessons 2 and/or 8**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Story songs devote a verse each to the beginning, middle, and end of a story.  
The main theme is communicated in the chorus.

Song title: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Remember, this will probably appear somewhere in your chorus as your hook.)

**FIRST VERSE** (introduces the story):

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**CHORUS** (theme of the story; includes your hook):

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**SECOND VERSE** (develops the story):

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**BRIDGE** (optional; includes an unexpected twist or new information):

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**REPEAT CHORUS****SECOND VERSE** (develops the story):

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**REPEAT CHORUS**