



# WORDS & MUSIC<sup>SM</sup>

TEACH LANGUAGE ARTS THROUGH LYRIC WRITING



**TEACHER'S GUIDE**  
FOR GRADES 3-6





***We're always together  
Always forever  
Nothing can stop us now  
When I'm with you the sky turns blue  
Feels like I'm floating on a cloud***



# WORDS & MUSIC<sup>SM</sup>

## Teach Language Arts Through Lyric Writing Teacher's Guide for Grades 3–6

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview .....	3
----------------	---

#### Lessons

1. What Is Songwriting? .....	8
2. Parts of a Song .....	12
3. Title and Hook .....	19
4. Subject and Theme .....	24
5. Rhythm and Syllables .....	29
6. Rhyme .....	33
7. Creating Strong Images .....	37
8. Focused Lyric-Writing Day .....	42
9. Revision .....	47
Preparing for Songwriter Workshop .....	48
Guidelines for Lyric Submission to Museum .....	48
10. Student Reflection and Careers in Songwriting .....	52
11. The Blues (Supplemental Lesson) .....	56

#### Appendix

Common Core Curriculum Standards .....	68
Music Curriculum Standards and Social & Emotional Learning Standards .....	69
Supplemental Materials .....	71
Pre-Unit Assessment Rubric .....	71
Final Lyric Assessment Rubric .....	72
Songwriter Manuscripts .....	77

Acknowledgments .....	Inside Back Cover
-----------------------	-------------------

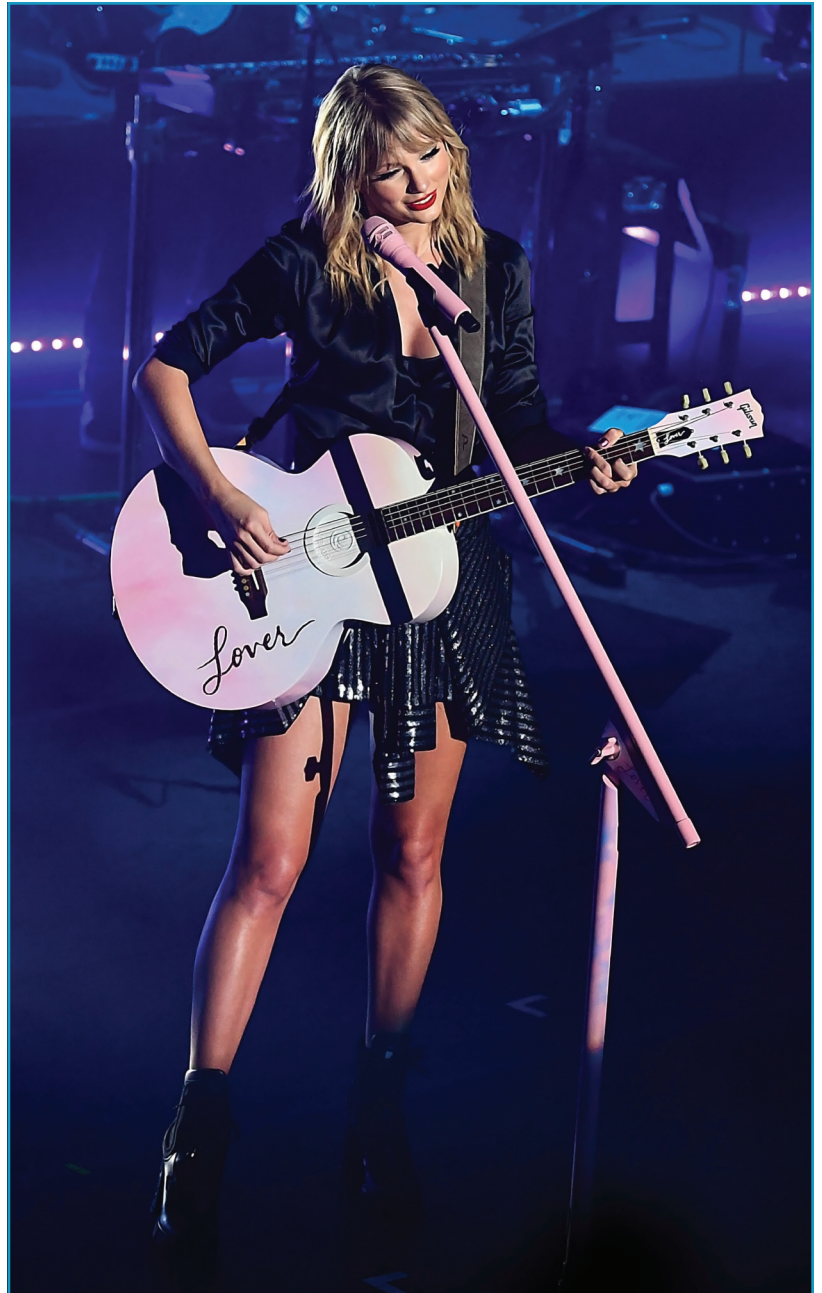


---

***“I was twelve  
when I  
learned my  
first three  
chords on  
guitar and  
wrote my  
first song.  
My life  
changed  
forever...  
Music became  
the way I  
told my  
stories.”***

***— Taylor Swift***

---



Since 1979, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum has been helping students tell their stories through its innovative Words & Music program. Over 40 years, nearly 150,000 students have learned how to write song lyrics while developing key skills in language arts. Not only does Words & Music teach core curriculum but it also connects young people to Nashville’s music community, pairing participating classes with songwriters who turn students’ work into finished songs that are performed in an interactive workshop. Revised in 2022, this lesson guide adds even more academic rigor, imaginative teaching approaches, and interdisciplinary connections to an already innovative program, with the intent of inspiring new generations of students to express themselves through creative writing.



## Overview

Welcome to *Words & Music: Teach Language Arts Through Lyric Writing*. This unit plan helps your class explore the art of lyric writing through ten complete lessons. Aligned with Common Core Standards, this interdisciplinary unit also can be tied to math, music, social studies, and visual arts. This unit also promotes social and emotional learning (SEL) by providing opportunities for students to demonstrate social and emotional competencies to lesson activities.

The lessons in this guide are designed to encourage collaborative, exploratory learning that can be tailored to a variety of learning styles and levels. Whenever possible, students should be encouraged to try new ideas and share them with one another.

The Words & Music unit is composed of ten 45-minute lessons. The lessons are cumulative, each one building on the next, so none should be skipped. The final project, writing a polished set of lyrics, combines everything students have learned in previous lessons. Final lyrics are sent to the museum to share with a professional songwriter, who will select a few works to set to music. Ultimately, students will hear the songwriter perform some lyrics as finished songs.

Though lyric writing is short-form creative writing, it requires no less ability than any other kind of creative writing. Of course, it also is just part of the task of songwriting, along with musical composition. Students will gain a firsthand knowledge of the skill necessary to craft art that is memorable, evocative, and appealing—a skill that, in the hands of a seasoned lyricist, can create great music.

Prior to teaching Words & Music for the first time, educators are strongly encouraged to attend a Words & Music professional development training. For a list of upcoming trainings, please visit [CountryMusicHallofFame.org/Professional-Development](http://CountryMusicHallofFame.org/Professional-Development) or email [Schools@CountryMusicHalloffame.org](mailto:Schools@CountryMusicHalloffame.org).

A digital version of this guide is available in the Teacher Resource Portal at [CountryMusicHallofFame.org/WordsAndMusic](http://CountryMusicHallofFame.org/WordsAndMusic) along with additional supplementary materials and lessons.

## METHODOLOGY

The intent of this unit is to give students a positive experience with creative thinking and writing and to provide an outlet for personal expression. Though students will have the opportunity to hear and discuss recorded music, the primary purpose of the unit is to develop language-arts skills. Writing well takes practice; students will be asked to produce a large quantity of work. Writing well also requires the development of creativity. Many of the assignments use a broad prompt to allow for the greatest variety of student ideas, but you should feel free to refine the prompts to encourage maximum creativity. You also can alter approximate instruction times, included with each lesson, according to your classroom needs.

In addition to writing, students will analyze other song lyrics. In many cases, students will find that the songs they admire do not conform to all of the rules taught in this guide. Students should be reminded that many great artists in a variety of disciplines studied and followed the rules before choosing to break them.

The ultimate goal of Words & Music is for students to complete a song lyric; however, not all lessons are focused on this goal. Throughout the lessons, students will write a great deal, generating a large amount of content. Students should be reminded often that their writing could become part of their final song, but the majority is intended as practice. You may want to tell students during each activity to be looking for a final topic. Some students may know what they want to write about in the first lesson; others might not know

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

This unit meets a variety of ELA Common Core State Standards, which are listed at the beginning of each lesson. All of the lessons incorporate collaboration with peers (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1) and writing routinely over extended and shorter time frames (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.10), so these standards are not listed at the beginning of every lesson. A full list of standards, including National Core Arts Anchor Standards and National Association for Music Education Standards, is located in the Appendix.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

Words & Music is primarily a creative-writing unit, but many topics in the songwriting curriculum have connections to other subjects, such as math, music, social studies, and visual arts. This guide notes opportunities to connect with peers in other subject areas to explore collaboration.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Each lesson includes activities, discussions, free writing, and song selections that connect to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), including:

- Acquiring and applying the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities.
- Managing emotions and achieving personal and collective goals.
- Feeling and showing empathy for others.
- Establishing and maintaining supportive relationships.
- Making responsible and caring decisions.

Throughout the unit, students will have many opportunities to write about and express their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. As lyric writing often brings out difficult subject matter and personal experiences, teachers should create a safe environment by setting classroom expectations for being kind and respectful to others during discussions.

Student choice is essential to creative lyric writing. Students should decide a song topic for themselves, drawing on ideas from their journal writings.

## MATERIALS

Ideally, students should have a spiral-bound journal (for free writing, brainstorming, and journaling prompts) and a folder or binder (for handouts and worksheets). For classroom instruction, you will need to access recordings of the songs that appear in the lessons. All recordings are located in the Teacher & Student Resource Portal at [CountryMusicHallofFame.org/Education/Teacher-Resource-Portal](http://CountryMusicHallofFame.org/Education/Teacher-Resource-Portal).

All lessons require copying worksheets, templates, lyric sheets, and/or rubrics for in-class use. Materials are identified in boldface in the introductory boxes that begin each lesson. The names of the materials reappear in boldface in the body of the lesson, indicating when to use them in class. Each lesson also includes an accompanying PowerPoint presentation, which can be used for synchronous and asynchronous instruction. All materials and PowerPoint files can also be found in the Teacher & Student Resource Portal.



## FREE WRITING

Every lesson includes time for free writing, which is intended to:

- Allow students to open their minds and enter into a creative spirit.
- Create a bank of ideas that students can draw from as they begin writing their songs.
- Teach students to write consistently and continuously for the time allotted.
- Encourage students not to feel inhibited by spelling, grammar, and other conventions.

## BRAINSTORMING

Each lesson includes a brainstorming session for individual, partner, or group work. Brainstorms begin with a prompt to students. These sessions, intended to last no longer than five minutes, should:

- Be completed in the students' writing journal.
- Add to the bank of ideas that students can draw from when writing songs.
- Allow students to experience spontaneous thought, which is necessary in any creative pursuit.

## TEACHER TIPS

Each lesson includes teacher tips that offer additional clarification and guidance for key topics. Many tips derive from feedback gathered from teachers and songwriters who have participated in Words & Music or assisted with the writing of this guide.

## VOCABULARY

Vocabulary words are listed at the beginning of each lesson, and then introduced in **boldface** within the body of the lesson.

## SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON

The Blues (p.56) is a supplemental lesson that explores the history and elements of traditional blues songs. The lesson is intended to be taught between lessons 7 and 8, and provide students another song form option when writing their final lyrics. (Note: Not every student should write a blues song so the songwriter workshop can present a wide variety of songs.)

## ESL AND STRUGGLING STUDENTS

While all students should attempt to work alone, co-writing can be a powerful tool for supporting students who are struggling, and it is acceptable for students to co-write for the final song project.

Since the primary goal of the unit is to develop creative thinking and writing skills, English-language learners should be encouraged to do their free writing and initial creative work in their first language. This will provide bilingual students with opportunities to make connections between two languages through a creative-thinking process. Students then can translate their writings into English, which will further support their English development. Point out to students that many successful songs are written in one language and then translated and recorded in another.

**Note:** Rhyming may be too challenging for students who are translating their work into English. Translations will be acceptable if they do not rhyme.

## ASSESSING STUDENT WORK

Assessment opportunities in this unit include free writing, in-class work (assignments and participation), homework, lyric revision worksheets, and the final song lyrics. Suggested grade weighting for the unit is indicated in parentheses:

1. A pre-assessment is included in Lesson 1 to capture a baseline of student knowledge of lyric writing.

**Use the pre-assessment rubric from the Supplemental Materials to score students' work.**

**Scores will be submitted to the Museum following the unit using the Online Teacher Evaluation at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicTeacher](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicTeacher).**

**Note:** *Words & Music* is grant-funded and dependent on Teacher Evaluation and Student Reflections in order to secure funding. The Museum appreciates your efforts in reporting accurate data so this award-winning program can be available to you and your students for free or low cost.

2. Free-writing activities (10%) are intended to be assessed as a completion grade. They should not be assessed for content or for proper grammar, spelling, or punctuation.
3. In-class work (25%), including brainstorms, class discussions, partner work, and worksheets, is part of every lesson. In-class work provides students with a daily opportunity to learn from their peers as well as share their work with a larger audience. Showcasing their ideas and writing also encourages students to be invested in the creative process. In-class worksheets reinforce the key information in each lesson. They can be graded to gauge student understanding of the concepts.
4. Homework (25%) can be collected and used as a daily grade.
5. Lyric revision worksheets (10%), including the songwriting checklist (Lesson 8) and the partner revision worksheet (Lesson 9), exhibit student understanding of the key concepts of lyric writing. They should be weighted separately from the other worksheets because they assess cumulative comprehension.

6. Final song lyrics (30%) are the main summative assessment. **Use the post-assessment rubric from the Supplemental Materials to score your students' work. Scores will be submitted to the Museum following the unit using the Online Teacher Evaluation at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicTeacher](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicTeacher).**

**Note:** Conventions are notably absent from rubrics because lyrics are not required to follow the conventions of standard English. Use your discretion in correcting spelling and grammar; assess errors only in terms of whether they interfere with the meaning of the writing assignment.



## Abridged Unit Plan

The Abridged Unit Plan is designed for teachers who have limited time with students and cannot teach the full ten-lesson unit. The five lessons are cumulative, featuring select activities from each lesson and culminating to the final project where students write a polished set of lyrics. Further adjustments may need to be made depending on the length and frequency of the class.

DAY	TITLE & LESSON PLAN	LESSON	ASSESSMENTS & HANDOUTS
<b>Day 1</b>	<b>What is Songwriting / Parts of a Song</b>		
	1. Introduction to Words & Music	Lesson 1	
	2. Songwriting Pre-Assessment	Lesson 1	"Try a Song" Worksheet (Pre-Assessment)*
	3. Brainstorm	Lesson 1	
	4. Group Discussion	Lesson 1	
	5. Activity #1 and 2	Lesson 2	"Somebody's Daughter" Student Lyric Sheet
	6. Homework (from Activity #3)	Lesson 2	Song Outline Worksheet
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Title and Hook / Subject and Theme</b>		
	1. Free Write**	Lesson 3	
	2. Discuss Homework	Lesson 3	
	3. Brainstorm	Lesson 3	
	4. Activity #1, 2 and 3	Lesson 3	"Country Girl" Lyric Sheet
	5. Activity #1 and 2	Lesson 4	"On the Road Again" Worksheet
	6. Homework	Lesson 4	Writing Titles and Hooks Worksheet
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Rhythm and Syllables / Rhyme</b>		
	1. Free Write	Lesson 6	
	2. Discuss Homework	Lesson 6	
	3. Brainstorm	Lesson 6	
	4. Activity #1, 2 and 3	Lesson 6	Rhyming Worksheet
	5. Activity #1 and 2	Lesson 5	
	6. Homework	Lesson 6	
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Creating Strong Images</b>		
	1. Free Write	Lesson 7	
	2. Discuss Homework	Lesson 7	
	3. Brainstorm	Lesson 7	
	4. Activity #1–6	Lesson 7	"Coat of Many Colors" Lyric Sheet, Images from Memory Worksheet
	5. Homework	Lesson 7	
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Focused Lyric Writing Day / Revision</b>		
	1. Free Write	Lesson 8	
	2. Discuss	Lesson 8	
	3. Brainstorm	Lesson 8	
	4. Lesson #1–4	Lesson 8	Songwriting Checklist Worksheet, Songwriting Outline Worksheet
	5. Activity #3 and 5	Lesson 9	
	6. Submitting Lyrics	Lesson 9	Final Song Lyrics (Final Assessment)*
	7. Evaluating the Program	Lesson 9	* See Lesson 10 for more details

\* See Pre-Unit Assessment Rubric and Final Lyric Assessment Rubric in Supplemental Materials (p.71–72)

\*\*See Free Write instructions and Teacher Tip in Lesson 2 (p.12)

## 1) What Is Songwriting?

### OBJECTIVES

Students will explore their preconceptions about songwriting.

Students will gain knowledge about what it takes to write a song.

### VOCABULARY

co-write

### PREPARATION

- Make copies of “Try a Song” Worksheet, Pre-Assessment rubric, and Songwriter Quotes Worksheet.
- Reserve computers or computer lab for Internet research.

### STANDARDS

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

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

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

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short, as well as more sustained, research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

## INTRODUCTION TO WORDS & MUSIC

Before starting the Words & Music lessons, share with students that throughout this unit they will be completing a variety of creative writing assignments. Some of their writing will become a song that they helped create. By the end of the unit, they will have generated lyrics that will be submitted to a professional songwriter, who will select some lyrics to set to music and perform the finished songs in a workshop and Q&A for the class.

## SONGWRITING PRE-ASSESSMENT (10 minutes)

Students will start this lesson by completing the “Try a Song” Worksheet, a pre-assessment to measure what they already know about songwriting. Use the pre-assessment rubric from the Supplemental Materials to score your students’ work. **Scores will be submitted to the Museum following the unit using the Online Teacher Evaluation at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicTeacher](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicTeacher).** Subsequent lessons will begin with free writing, which will be formally introduced in the second lesson.

Distribute the “Try a Song” Worksheet.

Share these instructions:

We are going to start by writing the words to a song. Don’t worry about whether you are doing it right or wrong. There are no wrong answers in this activity. Just do your best to get your ideas onto paper. For five minutes, write as much of your lyrics as you can. This should be your own song, not a song you know or have heard before.

Then for five minutes, answer these questions in as much detail as you can: What makes a song? What are its parts? What do all songs have in common?

### TEACHER TIP

Students may feel overwhelmed with this first activity. Tell students that although they may have no idea what to write or how to write a song, that is okay. This is just a warm-up activity; they are not expected to write a perfect song in five minutes. As long as they get something down on paper, they should feel good about their work.

## BRAINSTORM (2 minutes)

**Prompt:** In your journal, list as many of your favorite songs as you can in a minute.

Afterward, pair students and allow them to quickly share one or two of their favorite songs with one another.



**GROUP DISCUSSION (8 minutes)**

Divide students into groups of four or five and give them 30 to 60 seconds to discuss the following questions. After each question, let the groups share answers with the whole class.

- Who writes songs?
- Why do people write songs?
- What skills are needed to write a good song?
- What makes a good song?
- Are you familiar with any songwriters?
- Have you ever tried to write a song?

**ACTIVITY (20 minutes)**

1. Have students conduct online research on two or three of their favorite songs from their brainstorm lists. For each song, they should research and record in their journals:

- Name(s) of the songwriter.
- Name of the artist who performed the song.
- Two other songs by the songwriter, writing down the song title and performer of each song.

2. Allow students to share any surprising findings from their research. Draw out the following points:

- People who perform songs are not always the people who write them.
- Many songwriters write for a variety of artists and musical genres.
- People often **co-write** songs, which means that two or more people work together to write a song.

**TEACHER TIP**

Students may need guidance as they research the composers of their favorite songs. Some helpful tips for successful online searches include:

- Type the title of the song followed by the word “songwriter.” For example: “I Heard It Through the Grapevine songwriter.”
- Allmusic.com is an excellent source for finding song credits. Wikipedia is also acceptable for this informal research assignment.

**WRAP-UP REFLECTION (5 minutes)**

Ask students to answer the following questions in their journals:

What makes you excited about writing a song? What makes you nervous about writing a song?

**HOMEWORK**

Distribute the **Songwriter Quotes Worksheet** and review the instructions:

Read the following quotes from professional songwriters. After each quote, write what it teaches you about songwriting. Next, write one to three sentences in your journal about what you learned from reading the quotes.

If time allows, it may be helpful to do the first quote together, as an example. Depending on the age and reading level of the students, you may want to assign only a portion of the quotes. Reference material for songwriting quotes can be found in Supplemental Materials.

WORKSHEET

Try a Song

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

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

1. Answer the following questions in as much detail as you can: What makes a song? What are its parts?  
What do all songs have in common?

PRE-ASSESSMENT

2. Try to write your own song in the next five to ten minutes. Don't worry about whether you do it right or wrong.  
This should be your own song, not a song you know or have heard before.

SONG TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

VERSE

CHORUS

VERSE



## WORKSHEET

## Songwriter Quotes

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

Read the following quotes from professional songwriters. After each quote, write what it teaches you about songwriting. Next, write one to three sentences in your journal about what you learned from reading the quotes.

1. “First of all, you have to trust yourself ... The other thing that you have to do ... Be sure to welcome failure. Always say, ‘You’re OK with me, failure.’ Because then you have no fear.” —**Neil Young**

\_\_\_\_\_

2. “I think the best songs are the most truthful and honest songs. And it’s because it’s stuff you can’t actually say yourself.” —**Ed Sheeran**

\_\_\_\_\_

3. “I would recommend that they [songwriters] follow through if they have an idea. Don’t quit halfway through like a baby. Go through the whole shebang and carry it through instead of quitting halfway.”  
—**Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys**

\_\_\_\_\_

4. “The rule is: Write bad songs, but write ’em. If you start writing bad songs, you start writing better songs, and then you start getting really good.” —**John Mayer**

\_\_\_\_\_

5. “Some people don’t realize that [a song] needs to be edited. They think it’s good the way it is ... Some people think they’re done with a song when I think they should go back and revise it. Even sometimes I’ll think a song’s done, but I have friends I work with who will tell me to revise.” —**John Legend**

\_\_\_\_\_

6. “A good portion of being available to be a writer is that emotionally you keep yourself open as a human being, you keep yourself healthy, you get enough rest, you get enough good food. Because without that you won’t have enough energy, and writing takes an enormous amount of energy.” —**Janis Ian**

\_\_\_\_\_

7. “I think anyone could do it [songwriting]. I think a lot of people try to write songs that are a little out of reach. And they should just sit down and write what they know. And what they see.” —**Loretta Lynn**

\_\_\_\_\_

## 2) Parts of a Song

### OBJECTIVES

Students will demonstrate an understanding of new vocabulary and concepts related to parts of a song.

Students will listen to songs and identify their elements.

### VOCABULARY

bridge, chorus, hook, outline, subject, theme, title, verse

### PREPARATION

- Make copies of the **“Somebody’s Daughter” Student Lyric Sheet, Song Outline Worksheet, and Song Structure Practice Worksheet.**
- Locate audio or video version of “Somebody’s Daughter” performed by Tenille Townes.

### STANDARDS

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

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

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

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5

Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

### FREE WRITE (5 minutes)

Every day, students will spend five minutes free writing. During this time, they do not need to worry about conventions like spelling or punctuation. Encourage students to:

- Write about anything that is on their minds.
- Focus on writing for the entire five minutes.
- Keep their pen or pencil moving the whole time.

### TEACHER TIP

Students may feel overwhelmed when they first start free writing. They may feel like they do not know what to write. The following ideas may help:

- Do the free write with the students and read yours aloud as an example of the different shapes a free write might take.
- Remind students that as long as they are writing something, they are doing well.
- Remind students that the most important thing about free writing is simply getting words onto the page.
- Allow students to volunteer sharing their free writes. Create a safe environment by setting classroom expectations for being kind and respectful to others as their peers share personal experiences. By sharing, students will develop social and emotional learning competencies such as self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills.

### DISCUSS HOMEWORK (5 minutes)

Ask students to share their responses to the songwriter quotes. Point out common themes as students share what they learned about what it takes to be a songwriter.

### BRAINSTORM (5 minutes)

**Prompt:** In your journal, write everything you know about the parts of a song in one minute.

Afterward, divide the class into small groups and ask each group to compile a master list. Ask groups to share their findings with the class. Make note of which parts the students mention so you can prepare for the next activity.



**ACTIVITY** (30 minutes)

1. Review or introduce the parts of a song, but do so briefly. They will be discussed in more detail in the second part of the activity.
  - The **title** is the name of the song.
  - The **subject** is the topic of the song.
  - The **theme** is the message of the song.
  - The **hook** is the part of the song that catches, or “hooks,” a listener’s attention and makes the song easy to remember. The title and hook are often the same, and the hook is usually repeated throughout the song. The title, theme, and hook should work together to let listeners know what the song is about.
  - The **verse** communicates the details of the song’s subject, such as who, what, where, when, why, and how. Songs usually have multiple verses.
  - The **chorus** is the part that is repeated throughout the song. It is usually simpler than the verses, and it often contains the hook. In ancient Greek plays, a group of singers, called a “chorus,” appeared between every act to summarize what had just occurred on stage.
  - The **bridge** introduces a twist or new idea on the subject. It usually occurs toward the end of the song, and it has a different melody from the verses and chorus. Note that not all songs have a bridge.
2. Distribute **“Somebody’s Daughter” Student Lyric Sheet**. Listen to the song as a class and ask students to identify the song parts by filling in the blanks on the lyric sheet. Then listen to the song again, pausing as directed on the **Teacher’s Lyric Sheet** to discuss song structure and parts as a class.
3. Explain that a song **outline** is a rough sketch of what the lyrics will communicate. Outlining a song is a useful way to help writers organize their thoughts. Distribute the **Song Outline Worksheet** and review these directions:

Circle one of the subjects that you would like to use to practice what you have learned about song structure. This does not have to be the topic of your final song. This is just practice. The title can be one word, or it can be a phrase that has to do with the subject you picked. The chorus should be about the theme of your song. For the verses, think about what details you can use to support the idea in your chorus. Fill in your outline on the next page.

This is an example of a student outline:

Title: Summertime

Verse 1 topic: Things I like about Summertime

Chorus theme: How much I love Summertime

Verse 2 topic: Places I go in the Summertime

Chorus theme (repeated): How much I love Summertime

Verse 3 topic: Things I do during the Summertime

**HOMEWORK**

Distribute the **Song Structure Practice Worksheet**, so students can apply what they have learned about structure to a song of their choice. Review the worksheet directions:

First, print out or write down the lyrics to one of your favorite songs. This song should be appropriate for school use.

Second, label the following parts of a song on the lyrics you choose: title, verse, chorus, bridge, hook.

Finally, write a sentence that identifies the theme of the song.

## TEACHER'S LYRIC SHEET

**Somebody's Daughter***Barry Dean / Luke Laird / Tenille Townes*

I drive home the same way  
Two left turns off the interstate  
And she's always standing at the stoplight on 18th Street  
She could be a Sarah, she could be an Emily  
An Olivia, maybe Cassidy  
With her shaky hands on the cardboard sign  
And she's looking at me

Bet she was somebody's best friend, laughing  
Back when she was somebody's sister  
Counting change at the lemonade stand  
Probably somebody's high school first kiss  
Dancing in a gym where the kids all talk about someday plans  
Now this light'll turn green and I'll hand her a couple dollars  
And I'll wonder if she got lost or they forgot her  
She's somebody's daughter  
Somebody's daughter  
Somebody's daughter

Did she give up wondering where the cars all go?  
Can she even tell that I don't know what to say?  
So I just nod my head and wave  
Well, no one's going to ask what she wants to be  
Or why we're both stuck here at the mercy of geography  
And whether it shines or rains

[Chorus:]

Oh, I don't know the reasons why  
I'm the one who's driving by  
And she's the one on the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> Street

[Chorus:]

Pause the song when you see this symbol:

**BEFORE LISTENING**Discuss the **title** of the song.

1. Ask students what they think this song is about, based on the title.
2. Prompt students to look for places where the title appears as they listen to the song.

Prompt students to notice that the melody will change in the chorus.

**DISCUSS CHORUS**

1. Prompt students to notice the repetition of the title in the chorus.
2. Prompt students to discuss the **theme**. Ask for textual evidence for their ideas.
3. Instruct students that this theme is the message of the song.
4. Ask students to identify the **hook** (the part that is repeated or makes the song easy to remember).

Prompt students to listen to the way the music stays the same in the second **verse** even though the words change.

**DISCUSS BRIDGE**

1. Prompt students to notice the way the melody changes and that the bridge is shorter than the verses and chorus.
2. Ask students to discuss the new or different idea presented in the bridge.

**AFTER LISTENING**

Discuss the way the verses contain supporting details for the subject. Ask students for textual evidence to support their ideas.

**ANSWER KEY TO "SOMEBODY'S DAUGHTER" STUDENT LYRIC SHEET**

- Song Parts (top to bottom): Verse, Chorus, Verse, Chorus, Bridge, Chorus
- Fill in the Blank: 1. Title, 2. Chorus, 3. Verses, 4. Theme, 5. Subject, 6. Bridge, 7. Hook

## STUDENT LYRIC SHEET

**Somebody's Daughter***Barry Dean / Luke Laird / Tenille Townes*

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

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

I drive home the same way  
 Two left turns off the interstate  
 And she's always standing at the stoplight on 18th Street  
 She could be a Sarah, she could be an Emily  
 An Olivia, maybe Cassidy  
 With her shaky hands on the cardboard sign and she's looking at me

Bet she was somebody's best friend, laughing  
 Back when she was somebody's sister  
 Counting change at the lemonade stand  
 Probably somebody's high school first kiss  
 Dancing in a gym where the kids all talk about someday plans  
 Now this light'll turn green and I'll hand her a couple dollars  
 And I'll wonder if she got lost or they forgot her  
 She's somebody's daughter  
 Somebody's daughter  
 Somebody's daughter

Did she give up wondering where the cars all go?  
 Can she even tell that I don't know what to say?  
 So I just nod my head and wave  
 Well, no one's going to ask what she wants to be  
 Or why we're both stuck here at the mercy of geography  
 And whether it shines or rains

Bet she was somebody's best friend, laughing  
 Back when she was somebody's sister  
 Counting change at the lemonade stand  
 Probably somebody's high school first kiss  
 Dancing in a gym where the kids all talk about someday plans  
 Now this light'll turn green and I'll hand her a couple dollars  
 And I'll wonder how she felt when no one caught her  
 She's somebody's daughter  
 Somebody's daughter  
 Somebody's daughter

Oh, I don't know the reasons why  
 I'm the one who's driving by  
 And she's the one on the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> Street

Bet she was somebody's best friend, laughing  
 Back when she was somebody's sister  
 Counting change at the lemonade stand  
 Probably somebody's high school first kiss  
 Dancing in a gym where the kids all talk about someday plans  
 Now this light'll turn green and I'll hand her a couple dollars  
 And I'll wonder if she got lost or they forgot her  
 She's somebody's daughter  
 Somebody's daughter  
 Somebody's daughter

**FILL IN THE BLANKS**

1. The \_\_\_\_\_  
is often the same as the hook.
2. Each \_\_\_\_\_  
has the same words.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ have  
different words but the same tune.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_  
is the message of the song.
5. The verses give supporting  
details about the \_\_\_\_\_,  
or topic, of the song.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_  
introduces a slightly different  
idea. It is shorter than the verses  
and chorus.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ is  
the part of the song that catches a  
listener's attention and is usually  
repeated throughout the song.

**WORD BANK**

Bridge, Chorus, Hook, Pre-Chorus  
 Subject, Theme, Title, Verses



## WORKSHEET

## Song Outline

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

An **outline** is a rough sketch of a song. Outlines help you organize your thoughts.

1. Circle one of the **subjects** below to use for practicing what you have learned about song structure. This does not have to be the topic of your final song. This is just practice.

## YOUR FAVORITE:

<i>sport</i>	<i>movie</i>	<i>food</i>	<i>pet</i>	<i>place</i>
<i>belonging</i>	<i>activity</i>	<i>relative</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>video game</i>

Create your own: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The **title**: This can be one word or it can be a phrase that has to do with the subject you picked.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The **chorus**: What is the theme of your song? \_\_\_\_\_

4. The **verses**: What details can you put in your verses to support the theme?

Here are some ideas for what to include in your verses. Draw a line to connect each verse in the lefthand column to only one item in the righthand column to decide what your verses will be about.

VERSE 1 will be about

VERSE 2 will be about

VERSE 3 will be about

- Specific things you like about your topic
- How you feel about your topic
- What you do with your topic
- How you interact with your topic
- When you first saw your topic
- How your topic changed you
- Physical qualities of your topic
- Someone your topic makes you think of
- Create your own: \_\_\_\_\_

## WORKSHEET

**Song Outline (continued)**

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

5. Fill in your outline below.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Verse 1 topic: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Chorus theme: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Verse 2 topic: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Chorus theme (repeated): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Verse 3 topic: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## HOMEWORK WORKSHEET

**Song Structure Practice**

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

1. Print or write down the lyrics to one of your favorite songs. This song should be appropriate for school use.

2. Label the following parts on the lyrics:

- Title
- Hook
- Verse
- Chorus
- Bridge

3. Write a sentence that describes the theme of the song.

---

---

---

**REMINDER**

- The **title** is the name of the song and often appears in the chorus.
- The **theme** is the message of the song.
- The **hook** is the part of the song that is repeated often and is easily remembered. The hook usually has all or part of the title in it.
- Each **verse** has different words but the same tune.
- Each **chorus** has the same words.
- The verses give supporting details for the **subject**.
- The **bridge** introduces a slightly different idea. It is often shorter than the verses and chorus.



### 3) Title and Hook

**OBJECTIVES**

Students will understand that most popular songs resonate with many people because the songs address common human experiences.

Students will generate their own list of common human experiences.

Students will practice writing song titles and hooks.

**VOCABULARY**

hook (review), title (review)

**PREPARATION**

- Make copies of **“Country Girl” Lyric Sheet** and **Writing Titles and Hooks Worksheet**.
- Locate audio or video version of “Country Girl” performed by The Carolina Chocolate Drops.

**STANDARDS****CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5**

Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

**FREE WRITE (5 minutes)****DISCUSS HOMEWORK (2 minutes)**

Allow students to share the lyrics of their selected songs with a partner, explaining why they labeled each song section and offering textual evidence.

**BRAINSTORM (5 minutes)**

Share with students that most popular songs are about common human experiences, which are actions, thoughts, or feelings that many people can relate to. Brainstorm a couple examples as a class to make sure all students understand the concept.

For the main brainstorm activity, students will work alone and then in groups of four or five. Review the directions:

In your journal, write down as many common human experiences as you can in one minute. Afterward, you will break into groups to compare your lists. The goal is to come up with experiences you think your classmates are also writing down, so keep that in mind with this exercise. Try not to “overthink” your list, but just go with what first comes to your mind; focus on getting your ideas on paper.

After the one-minute brainstorm, divide the class into groups, and review these directions:

You now have two minutes to compare lists with your group, circling anything on your list that you have in common with another group member’s list.

Allow students to share some of their most common experiences with the whole class.

**ACTIVITY (30–35 minutes)**

1. Share this information:
  - A song **title** often comes from things heard in daily life. This can be a cool phrase, a line in a movie or TV show, or something repeated all the time.
  - Titles may or may not include the subject of the song. For example, the song “Stuck with U,” performed by Ariana Grande and Justin Bieber, is actually about being stuck with someone and cherishing the time together, while the song “Cardigan,” performed by Taylor Swift, is not just about a cardigan but about looking back on a young lost love.
2. Ask students to share other examples of song titles that may or may not include the subject.
3. Distribute **“Country Girl” Lyric Sheet**. Prepare students to listen to the song by doing the following:
  - Discuss the title. What do students think the song will be about? Is the title a phrase that the songwriters likely made up, or is it a phrase that they likely heard somewhere and then wrote a song about it?
  - Ask students to get ready to listen to the way the title shows up in the chorus.
4. Listen to “Country Girl” and discuss:
  - How is the title used in the song?
  - What makes this title catchy? (There is no correct answer to this question, so responses will vary. Facilitate the discussion to draw out a variety of opinions.)
  - Discuss the relationship between the title, hook, and chorus. (This discussion should reinforce the concept that the title, hook, and chorus are related to one another. The **hook** usually occurs in the chorus, and all or part of the hook usually appears in the title.)
5. Ask students to list the following items in their journals:
  - Three things that you think about a lot.
  - Three objects or ideas that are important to you.
  - The first two happy memories that come to your mind.
  - The first two sad memories that come to your mind.
  - The first funny memory that comes to your mind.

**TEACHER TIP**

Remind students not to overthink their lists—just go with what first enters their minds. The main goal is to get their ideas down on paper.

6. Distribute the **Writing Titles and Hooks Worksheet** and review the directions:

Look over the lists you just created. You may also look through what you wrote in previous lessons. Pick one or two subjects to practice writing song titles and hooks. Then create three possible song titles (which also can serve as hooks) for each subject.

Support students as they practice writing titles and hooks.

**Note:** You may wish to encourage students to pick one of their titles for their final song.

### TEACHER TIP

If students get stuck writing titles, remind them that they also write titles for stories and essays in class.

Writing a title for a song is a similar task.



*The Carolina Chocolate Drops was a traditional African-American string-band featuring founding member Rhiannon Giddens. Their album “Geniune Negro Jig” won Best Traditional Folk Album at the 2010 Grammy Awards. Above: Rhiannon Giddens 2021. Photo courtesy of Ebru Yildiz.*

### HOMEWORK

Give students the following prompt to complete as a journal entry:

Titles can come from everyday conversations you overhear, a cool or popular phrase, a line in a movie or TV show, or something that your family or friends say all the time. For the rest of the school day and tonight when you go home, use your journal to record anything catchy you hear. Remember to listen in the hallways, the cafeteria, the playground, and on your way home. A good song title can come from anywhere! Write down as many titles as you can. You will share your favorite titles with the class tomorrow.

## LYRIC SHEET

**Country Girl***Rhiannon Giddens / Lalenja Harrington / Adam Matta*

I was raised in the country, that's a natural fact  
 Food on the table from the garden out back  
 Everyone working to make the land their own  
 Red clay crackin' where the silver queen grows

Runnin' with your cousins from yard to yard  
 Livin' was easy but the playin' was hard  
 Didn't have much, nothing comes for free  
 All you needed was your family

I am a country girl  
 I've been around the world  
 And every place I've been  
 Ain't quite nothin' like  
 Livin' in the south  
 I wanna shut your mouth  
 I am a country girl  
 I am a country girl

Biscuits in the morning and gravy too  
 Fried chicken in the afternoon  
 Jaw draggin' eatin' sweet potato pie  
 Takin' half an hour to say goodbye

Blackberry patches scuffin' on by  
 Sweet Georgia peaches and dandelion wine  
 The best kind of food is made by hand  
 The only place to get it is from the land

I am a country girl  
 I've been around the world  
 And every place I've been  
 Ain't got nothin' like  
 Livin' in the south  
 I wanna shut your mouth  
 I am a country girl  
 I am a country girl

All day I dream about a place in the sun  
 Kinda like where I'm from  
 With the tall grass blowin' in the breeze  
 Runnin' bare foot from the tall oak tree

All day I dream about a place I've been  
 A place where the skin I'm in  
 Feels like it's supposed to be  
 And anyone around who looks at me says

I am a country girl  
 I've been around the world  
 And every place I've been  
 Ain't quite nothin' like  
 Livin' in the south  
 I wanna shut your mouth  
 I am a country girl  
 I am a country girl

Livin in the south  
 I wanna shut your mouth

I was born in the country, that's a natural fact  
 On these long city days I wanna look back  
 To see tobacco fields a row after row  
 Red clay crackin' where the silver queen grows



## WORKSHEET

**Writing Titles and Hooks**

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

1. Look over the lists you just created. (You may also look through what you wrote in previous lessons.)  
Pick one or two subjects to practice writing song titles and themes.

Subject1: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject2: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Create three possible song titles for each subject.

**SUBJECT 1**

Title1: \_\_\_\_\_

Title2: \_\_\_\_\_

Title3: \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBJECT 2**

Title1: \_\_\_\_\_

Title2: \_\_\_\_\_

Title3: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Think about how your titles might become hooks. Which titles would make the best hooks for a song?  
Which do you find catchy to say or sing?

---

---

---

**REMINDER**

Sometimes the title has the subject in it (for example, “Country Girl,” “Stuck with U”). Sometimes the title has something related to the subject (“Let It Go,” “Cardigan”). The title is usually the hook of the song.

## 4) Subject and Theme

### OBJECTIVES

Students will understand the relationship between the theme, title, hook, and chorus of a song.

Students will use textual evidence to determine the subject of a song.

Students will use textual evidence to determine the theme about the subject.

### VOCABULARY

subject, theme (review)

### PREPARATION

- Make copies of **“On the Road Again” Worksheet** and **Subject and Theme Worksheet**.
- Locate audio or video versions of “On the Road Again,” performed by Willie Nelson; “Forever and Ever, Amen” performed by Randy Travis; and “Love Hurts” performed by Emmylou Harris and Rodney Crowell. Note: Another option for “Love Hurts” is the Everly Brothers version.

### STANDARDS

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

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

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

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.3

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

### FREE WRITE (5 minutes)

### DISCUSS HOMEWORK (4 minutes)

Divide students into pairs to spend one minute sharing their favorite titles. Next ask students to pick one of their favorite titles and share it with the whole group. Students may wish to say where they heard the title.

### BRAINSTORM (1 minute)

**Prompt:** In your journal, write down the titles of as many popular songs as you can think of in one minute. A popular song is one that has been heard by millions of people on the radio, stereo, Internet, and/or television. Titles should be appropriate for school use.



Since the mid-1950s, Willie Nelson has written hundreds of songs, including “Crazy,” “Night Life,” and “On the Road Again”—timeless classics that have been recorded by dozens of artists. The Texas native was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1993.

**ACTIVITY (30–35 minutes)**

1. Students will explore the relationship between the title and the subject of a song. Remind students that the **subject** is the topic of the song. Ask students to share some of their favorite popular-song titles and write six to eight on the board. For each song ask:
  - What is the subject of this song?
  - Is that subject reflected in the title? How?
  - Is the title ever sung in the song?
  - In what part of the song does that happen?
2. Distribute the **“On the Road Again” Worksheet** that includes song lyrics by Willie Nelson and discussion questions. Play the song for the class. Divide the class into pairs to discuss the following questions, then open up the discussion to the whole group:
  - What is the subject of this song?
  - What evidence from the song supports your position? (Guide students toward noticing that the chorus, hook, and title all work together to communicate the subject, which is being on the road.)
  - The **theme** is the message of the song. What is the theme? What does Willie Nelson think about being on the road? (For example, he could have written a song about how he hates being on the road or how the road makes him lonely.)
  - What evidence from the song supports your position?
  - What do the lyrics imply about how Willie Nelson feels when he is not on the road?
  - What evidence from the song makes you think so?

**TEACHER TIP**

Students will probably answer that Willie Nelson likes being on the road, but try probing to get more specific answers. An example of a more complete answer would be that he looks forward to getting on the road again because, to him, the road means playing music with his friends and seeing new places.

3. Students will do a deep reading of two songs and explore their themes and messages. Distribute the **Theme and Message Worksheet**. Listen to “Forever and Ever, Amen” and “Love Hurts,” and then divide the class into pairs to work on the Subject and Theme Worksheet. Review the directions:

Read along on the lyric sheets as you listen to “Forever and Ever, Amen” and “Love Hurts.” Then answer the questions found on the last page of the worksheet.

**HOMEWORK**

Read the following prompt for students to complete as a journal entry:

Look over your previous writing and find a subject to write more about in your journal. If you can’t think of a subject, look back at the lists you created in lesson two, and use one of those to write more about. Your writing can take the form of an essay, a story, a poem, a thoughtfully drawn comic strip, or song lyrics. Just focus on getting your ideas on paper. Remember to include a title that reflects the subject of whatever you write.

WORKSHEET

“On the Road Again”

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

- 1. Listen to “On the Road Again.” Read along using the lyric sheets.
- 2. Discuss the questions with a partner, then share your answers with the whole class.

On the Road Again

Willie Nelson

On the road again  
Just can't wait to get on the road again.  
The life I love is making music with my friends  
And I can't wait to get on the road again.

On the road again  
Goin' places that I've never been  
Seein' things that I may never see again  
And I can't wait to get on the road again.

On the road again  
Like a band of gypsies we go down the highway  
We're the best of friends  
Insisting that the world keep turning our way

And our way is on the road again.  
Just can't wait to get on the road again.  
The life I love is makin' music with my friends  
And I can't wait to get on the road again.

On the road again  
Like a band of gypsies we go down the highway  
We're the best of friends  
Insisting that the world keep turning our way

And our way is on the road again.  
Just can't wait to get on the road again.  
The life I love is makin' music with my friends  
And I can't wait to get on the road again.  
And I can't wait to get on the road again.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is the subject of this song?
- What evidence from the song supports your position?
- The theme is the message of the song. What does Willie Nelson think about being on the road?
- What evidence from the song supports your position?
- What do the lyrics imply how Willie Nelson feels when he is not on the road?
- What evidence from the song makes you think so?



## WORKSHEET

## Subject and Theme

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

1. Listen to “Forever and Ever, Amen” and “Love Hurts.” Read along below.
2. Answer the questions found on the second page of the worksheet.

**Forever and Ever, Amen***Paul Overstreet / Don Schlitz*

You may think that I'm talking foolish  
 You've heard that I'm wild and I'm free  
 You may wonder how I can promise you now  
 This love, that I feel for you, always will be

You're not just time that I'm killing  
 I'm no longer one of those guys  
 As sure as I live this love that I give  
 Is gonna be yours until the day that I die – oh, baby

I'm gonna love you forever, forever and ever, amen  
 As long as old men sit and talk about the weather  
 As long as old women sit and talk about old men

If you wonder how long I'll be faithful  
 I'll be happy to tell you again  
 I'm gonna love you forever and ever, forever and ever, amen

They say time takes its toll on a body  
 Makes a young girl's brown hair turn grey  
 But honey, I don't care, I ain't in love with your hair  
 And if it all fell out, well, I'd love you anyway

They say that time can play tricks on a memory,  
 make people forget things they knew.  
 well, it's easy to see it's happening to me  
 I've already forgotten every woman but you – oh, darling

I'm gonna love you forever, forever and ever, amen  
 As long as old men sit and talk about the weather  
 As long as old women sit and talk about old men

If you wonder how long I'll be faithful  
 well, just listen to how this song ends  
 I'm gonna love you forever and ever, forever and ever, amen.

**Love Hurts***Boudleaux Bryant*

Love hurts, love scars  
 Love wounds and mars  
 Any heart, not tough  
 Nor strong enough  
 To take a lot of pain  
 Take a lot of pain  
 Love is like a cloud  
 Holds a lot of rain

Love hurts  
 Love hurts

I'm young, I know  
 But even so  
 I know a thing or two  
 I've learned from you  
 I've really learned a lot  
 Really learned a lot  
 Love is like a stove  
 Burns you when it's hot

Love hurts  
 Love hurts

Some fools rave of happiness  
 Blissfulness, togetherness  
 Some fools fool themselves, I guess  
 But they're not foolin' me

I know it isn't true  
 Know it isn't true  
 Love is just a lie  
 Made to make you blue

Love hurts  
 Love hurts  
 Love hurts

WORKSHEET

Subject and Theme (continued)

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

SUBJECT AND THEME QUESTIONS:

1. What is the subject of “Forever and Ever, Amen”?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the theme of “Forever and Ever, Amen”? What is your evidence?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the subject of “Love Hurts”?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the theme of “Love Hurts”? What is your evidence?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Underline evidence in the lyrics of both songs to support your answers for questions 2 and 4.

## 5) Rhythm and Syllables

### OBJECTIVES

Students will determine the number of syllables in lines of a song.

Students will demonstrate the ability to apply what they learn about rhythm and syllables to their own songs.

### VOCABULARY

rhythm, syllables

### PREPARATION

- Make copies of **Rhythm and Syllables Worksheet**.
- (optional) Locate audio or video versions of “You Are My Sunshine.” A number of artists have recorded this song, including Johnny Cash, Ray Charles, Jimmie Davis, The Civil Wars, Mississippi John Hurt, and Willie Nelson.

### STANDARDS

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone

### FREE WRITE (5 minutes)

### DISCUSS HOMEWORK (4 minutes)

Divide the class into pairs to share their journal entries. Students should identify the subject and theme of their partner’s journal entry, supporting their conclusions with textual evidence.

### BRAINSTORM (1 minute)

**Prompt:** In your journal, spend one minute defining rhythm and naming places where you hear rhythm.

### ACTIVITY (35 minutes)

1. Offer a reminder that songs are a combination of words and music. For lyrics to fit with music, songwriters need to learn about these terms and concepts:
  - **Rhythm** is a pattern of sounds and silences.
  - **Syllables** are the parts that a word is naturally divided into when it is pronounced.
  - Songwriters pick words and phrases that fit within a consistent pattern of syllables. In short, they make their words fit a rhythm.



(L–R): Johnny Cash, Ray Charles, Waylon Jennings, and Bill Walker. Ray Charles’ album *Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music* was one of the top country music albums at the height of the civil rights movement in 1962.

2. To illustrate the importance of lyrics that match a rhythm, read or sing the following lyrics aloud. Then read the second set of lyrics with the added syllables. Students should be able to hear that something about the rhythm sounds wrong.

**THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER** *Francis Scott Key*

And the rocket's red glare  
The bombs bursting in air  
Gave proof through the night  
That our flag was still there

And the rocket's red glare  
The bombs exploding all over the place  
Gave proof through the night  
That our flag was still there

**WE WILL ROCK YOU** *Brian May (of Queen)*

We will, we will rock you  
We will, we will rock you

We will, we will rock you  
We will, we will beat you really bad

**TEACHER TIP**

Allow students to have fun with this activity. Let them add syllables to other lyrics so that they sound funny. Make the point that songwriters can squeeze in words, if need be, but that certain phrases fit better than others.

3. Distribute the **Rhythm and Syllables Worksheet**, but before assigning it, you may wish to play a recording of “You Are My Sunshine.” Students may enjoy listening to several versions. To reinforce the idea of rhythm, allow students to clap or tap their feet along to the beat.

Review the worksheet directions:

With a partner, count the number of syllables in each line of the songs. Then write down the number of syllables in each blank.

After students have completed the worksheet, point out that the first verse has the same number of syllables in every line as the second verse. (**Note:** Count the syllables as they would be pronounced when spoken. For example, “every,” is normally pronounced with two syllables: “evry.”)

Discuss the following:

- What happened when you added an extra word to one of the lines?
- Why would most lines of the verses need to have the same number of syllables?  
(Answer: to fit the rhythm of the song.)

**TEACHER TIP**

Students might mistake the rhythm of lyrics for the rhythm or beat of a song, particularly when thinking of rap or hip-hop songs that are driven by intricate or intense beats. Students might focus on creating a beat rather than on creating lyrics that fit a beat. While a song's beat and its lyrics are interrelated, students should focus on the lyrics for this activity. Students particularly focused on the beat may find it helpful to create a simple beat in their heads first and then write lyrics to that beat. Stress that the lyrics are the important part of this activity.

Fitting lyrics uniformly into a certain rhythm is an integral part of songwriting. While students will not master this skill in just one lesson, it is essential that they understand:

- Each line of the verses should have about the same number of syllables.
- Each line of the chorus should have about the same number of syllables.
- It is acceptable to have up to three more syllables in a line if it happens in a pattern; for example, it can be considered a pattern if lines one and three have five syllables and lines two and four have eight syllables, or if the last line of every verse has two more syllables than the other lines of the verse.

4. If time allows, students should begin on their homework assignment in class. This will give you the opportunity to make sure students are on the right track.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTION OPPORTUNITY**

Reaching out to teachers in other disciplines will help supplement student understanding of rhythm from a variety of viewpoints. The following subjects provide opportunities for connection:

- Music: meter, rhythm, phrasing
- Math: patterns
- Literature: meter, poetry

**Note:** Math and music teachers could collaborate in a lesson about the mathematical aspects of rhythm and time signatures in music.

**HOMEWORK**

Read the following prompt for students to complete as a journal entry:

In your journal write a part of a song that uses what you learned today about rhythm and syllables. This writing (and all the writing you do in this unit) could become part of your final song, or you could use it just as practice.

Your verse or chorus should have four lines and should follow one of these syllable patterns:

**Option A**

Line 1: 8 syllables  
Line 2: 8 syllables  
Line 3: 8 syllables  
Line 4: 8 syllables

**Option B**

Line 1: 6 syllables  
Line 2: 8 syllables  
Line 3: 6 syllables  
Line 4: 8 syllables

**Option C**

Line 1: 6 syllables  
Line 2: 6 syllables  
Line 3: 6 syllables  
Line 4: 8 syllables

For extra practice, try writing one of each.



## WORKSHEET

**Rhythm and Syllables**

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

1. With a partner, count the number of syllables in each line of the songs below, and then write that number in each blank.

**You Are My Sunshine***Jimmie Davis***VERSE** The other night dear \_\_\_\_\_

As I lay sleeping \_\_\_\_\_

I dreamed I held you in my arms \_\_\_\_\_

But when I awoke, dear \_\_\_\_\_

I was mistaken \_\_\_\_\_

So I hung my head and I cried \_\_\_\_\_

**VERSE** I'll always love you \_\_\_\_\_

And make you happy \_\_\_\_\_

If you will only say the same \_\_\_\_\_

But if you leave me \_\_\_\_\_

To love another \_\_\_\_\_

You'll regret it all some day \_\_\_\_\_

2. Add a few words to one line of each verse. How does this affect the line's fit with the others?

---



---



---



---

## 6) Rhyme

### OBJECTIVES

Students will determine rhyme scheme.

Students will identify exact rhyme and approximate rhyme.

Students will demonstrate the ability to apply rhyme scheme to their own songs.

### VOCABULARY

approximate rhyme, exact rhyme

### PREPARATION

- Make copies of **Rhyming Worksheet**.
- (optional) Locate audio or video versions of “When You Say Nothing at All,” performed by Alison Krauss; “Ride Out in the Country” performed by Yola; “Hungry Eyes,” performed by Merle Haggard; and “Man in Black,” performed by Johnny Cash.

**Note:** Another option for “When You Say Nothing at All” is Keith Whitley’s version.

### STANDARDS

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

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5

Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

### FREE WRITE (5 minutes)

### DISCUSS HOMEWORK (2 minutes)

Divide class into pairs for students to review what they have written.

**Prompt:** What syllable patterns did each of you use? Why did you pick it? If you tried more than one, was one easier than another?

### BRAINSTORM (1 minute)

**Prompt:** In your journal, write as many words that rhyme with “top” as you can in 30 seconds. Your rhyming words do not have to be only one syllable long. For example, “hip-hop” rhymes with “tip-top” or just “top.” Share a few of your favorites with a partner.



*Grammy Award-winning songwriter Don Schlitz wrote “Forever and Ever, Amen,” “The Gambler,” and “When You Say Nothing at All,” among other hits.*

**ACTIVITY (35–40 minutes)**

1. Explain that rhymes occur when words at the end of two or more lines in a song share the same or a similar sound.

Rhymes can be exact or approximate:

- An **exact rhyme** has the same ending sound. “Last,” “past,” and “fast” are examples of exact rhyme.
- An **approximate rhyme** sounds like a rhyme, depending on how the artist sings the words, though the words do not have exactly the same ending sounds. “Age,” “fade,” and “play” – which all share the same vowel sound – are examples of approximate rhyme.

**TEACHER TIP**

Emphasize throughout the lesson that rhymes should support the meaning of the song. It is better to have a word that does not rhyme than to use a word that does not make sense.

2. Distribute the **Rhyming Worksheet** and offer these directions to help students visualize the rhyming patterns in the sample lyrics:

A “rhyme scheme” describes the pattern of rhyming words in a song. To help you identify the rhyme scheme in these song excerpts, you will be using the first two letters of the alphabet. “A” is used for the first line, and any other lines that rhyme with it are also labeled “A.” When you come to a line that does not rhyme with “A,” you will label it “B.” All lines that rhyme with this line will be labeled “B,” as well. When you encounter the next rhyming sequence, return to “A,” and then “B,” and so on. You should circle words that are exact rhymes and underline words that are approximate rhymes.

- Do the first verse of the worksheet as a class exercise.
  - Allow students to work with partners or in groups to complete the worksheet.
  - If time allows, listen to one or more of the songs on the worksheet. You may wish to play excerpts as students complete the worksheet.
3. Share the following resources to help students with rhyming:
    - Websites such as RhymeZone.com and Rhymery.com offer rhyme searches. Rhyming dictionaries can be found in many libraries.
    - A thesaurus, either on the Internet or in the library, is a resource for synonyms.
  4. If time allows, students should try to write at least one verse that follows an “AABB” or “ABAB” rhyme scheme. Students who finish early should try other types of rhyme schemes.

**TEACHER TIP**

Remind students that they should be looking for the topic of their final song as they continue to write for practice. If they know their final topic, they may wish to begin working on their song in homework assignments or during in-class writing.

**HOMEWORK**

Read the following prompt for students to complete as a journal entry:

Try writing part or all of a song that uses what you have learned about rhyming. To get inspired, look back at what you have written so far in your journal. Remember that your rhymes can be exact or approximate. And remember to pick words that fit what you want to say, not just words that rhyme. You can use websites to help you find rhyming words. What you write in this assignment could be part of your final song or it could just be for practice.

## WORKSHEET

**Rhyming**

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

1. Identify the rhyme schemes of these song excerpts by placing the correct letter (A or B) in the blanks provided.
2. Circle words that are exact rhymes and underline words that are approximate rhymes.

**When You Say Nothing at All***Paul Overstreet / Don Schlitz*

It's amazing how you can speak right to my heart \_\_\_\_\_

Without saying a word, you can light up the dark \_\_\_\_\_

Try as I may, I could never explain \_\_\_\_\_

What I hear when you don't say a thing \_\_\_\_\_

The smile on your face lets me know that you need me \_\_\_\_\_

There's a truth in your eyes saying you'll never leave me \_\_\_\_\_

A touch of your hand says you'll catch me if ever I fall \_\_\_\_\_

You say it best, when you say nothing at all \_\_\_\_\_

**Ride Out in the Country***Dan Auerbach / Joe Allen / Yola*

I take a ride out in the country, get some wind in my hair \_\_\_\_\_

Let it all go like I ain't got a care \_\_\_\_\_

I take a ride out in the country in the soft summer breeze \_\_\_\_\_

Forgetting about you, forgetting about me \_\_\_\_\_

## WORKSHEET

## Rhyming (continued)

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

**Hungry Eyes***Merle Haggard*

Mama never had the luxuries she wanted \_\_\_\_\_

But it wasn't cause my daddy didn't try \_\_\_\_\_

She only wanted things she really needed \_\_\_\_\_

One more reason for my mama's hungry eyes \_\_\_\_\_

**NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!**

Fill in the blanks to "Man in Black" with your own words or phrases.

Follow the rhyme scheme on the right side of each line.

**Man in Black***Johnny Cash*Well, you wonder why I always dress in \_\_\_\_\_ A  
(1 syllable)Why you never see \_\_\_\_\_ colors on my \_\_\_\_\_ A  
(1 syllable) (1 syllable)And why does my appearance seem to have a \_\_\_\_\_ B  
(3 syllables)Well, there's a reason for the things that \_\_\_\_\_ B  
(3 syllables)**REMINDER****Rhyme scheme** is the pattern of rhyming words at the ends of lines.**Exact rhymes** have the same ending sounds, like "last" and "past."**Approximate rhymes** sound similar to each other, like "age" and "fade."



## 7) Creating Strong Images

### OBJECTIVES

Students will explore the difference between showing and telling.

Students will understand the concept of painting a mental image in songwriting.

Students will demonstrate the ability to create strong images.

### VOCABULARY

images, metaphor, sensory details, simile, theme (review)

### PREPARATION

- Make copies of “Coat of Many Colors” Lyric Sheet and Images From Memory Worksheet.
- Locate audio or video version of “Coat of Many Colors” written and performed by Dolly Parton.

### STANDARDS

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

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

### FREE WRITE (5 minutes)

### DISCUSS HOMEWORK (2 minutes)

Allow students to share with the class the favorite rhymes they wrote.

### BRAINSTORM (6 minutes)

This exercise will help students become more aware of the details that their senses pick up constantly.

**Prompt:** In your journal, list as many details about your current surroundings as you can in 30 seconds. Try to move past the obvious things you see and try to find tiny details that someone else might not notice.

Ask students to raise their hands if they listed anything other than a visual detail (a sound, a smell, a feeling, or a taste) in their list. Share with students that we often rely on visual details, but using all five senses creates even stronger images.

**Prompt:** For the next 30 seconds, close your eyes and listen. Pay attention to every little sound. Open your eyes and list as many sounds as you can in 30 seconds.

Repeat this prompt for each of the other senses (smell, taste, touch), allowing 30 seconds to think with eyes closed and 30 seconds to write. If students have trouble with smell and taste, ask them to list memorable smells or tastes that they have experienced recently.

Ask students to share some of their details with the class.

**ACTIVITY (30–35 minutes)**

## 1. Share with students:

Every waking moment, we absorb a tidal wave of information through our senses, often without recognizing the many pieces that make up what we are experiencing. But when we concentrate on each sense, we are able to identify the **sensory details**, the individual sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and touch sensations that allow us to take in our surroundings. When we isolate these details and describe them in vivid and colorful language, we can stir mental pictures, or **images**, in our listeners' minds. We know this already from the storybooks we all read and enjoy. Whether spoken, read, or sung, words have the power to fire our imaginations, involving us in someone else's senses, memories, and feelings, almost as if we are experiencing them, too. Sensory details are the most powerful tool to create the images that move our emotions.

## 2. Write the following words on the board: sadness, joy, anger, fear, calm. Ask students to pick one of the words and think of situations when they had that emotion. (For example, here's a situation for joy: "My brother is in the Army and he's been away for six months. But last week, there was a knock on our front door, and when my mom opened it, there he was. I ran to him and he scooped me up and we hugged and cried.")

Students should spend five to seven minutes writing down a minimum of five ideas. Afterward, allow students to describe an experience with the whole group, urging them to try to tell the story without using the actual word for the emotion they're recalling (sadness, joy, etc.).

## 3. Share with students:

When you hear stories like this that communicate feelings, it's easy to picture them in your mind. These images allow you to show your audience an emotion instead of simply telling them you were sad, happy, angry, or afraid. Songwriters use images to show emotions to their listeners instead of directly stating, "I feel angry," or "I felt sad." Images support the **subject**, which is the topic of the song. So when you use a strong image in your writing, it shows your audience more about your subject than if you just told them about it. Remember that it's always more powerful to show, rather than tell.

## 4. Share this information, as well:

Two figures of speech, **simile** and **metaphor**, also can be used to create strong imagery in your lyrics. A simile is a descriptive comparison that uses "like" or "as." For example, "He was as fast as a whirlwind on the basketball court," or "The sun rose like a neon tangerine." A metaphor makes similar comparisons without using "like" or "as."

Notice how similes and metaphors compare two unlike things that share a similar feature. For example, "He was a whirlwind on the basketball court," or "At dawn, the sun was a neon tangerine."

5. Distribute the **"Coat of Many Colors" Lyric Sheet**. Play the song and ask students to point out images that Dolly Parton uses to show instead of tell.6. Distribute the **Images From Memory Worksheet** and review the directions:

First, circle one of the categories that reminds you of a memory. For example, for "kitchen/bedroom," you could remember making cookies in your grandmother's kitchen or spilling a carton of milk in a friend's kitchen or having a pillow fight in your sister's bedroom. Second, close your eyes and try to put yourself back in that memory. Think of who was there, what was around you, what emotions the memory gives you. List as many details as you can from each of your five senses and your emotions.

7. Share with students that songwriters choose sensory details and images carefully to evoke feelings in their listeners. Read aloud these lyrics written by a student who participated in the Words & Music program:

Sitting on the porch  
Listening to the breeze  
Watching the street scorch  
Feel so at ease

Ask the class:

- What kind of images do you see when you hear these lyrics?
- What senses does the writer involve?
- What kind of emotion does the image create?

Now read aloud the second verse of the student's song:

Sitting on the porch  
On a cold and dreary day  
Listening to the storm  
That just won't go away

Ask the class:

- What is different about the images in this verse?
- How does this lyric relate differently to your senses than the first verse?
- How is the emotion different from the first verse?
- What other senses could you use to build on the images in these two verses?

### TEACHER TIP

Remind students that they will write the first draft of their final songs in the next lesson. They should be gaining inspiration from the writing they have already completed, so they should come prepared to the next class with all the writing they have done so far. Students should also bring an idea of the topic for their final song.

### HOMEWORK

Direct students to use the sensory details on their **Images From Memory Worksheet** to write a paragraph, poem, or song in their journals that retells the memory. Ask them to use as many of the details from their lists as they can, and remind them to use at least one detail from each of the five senses. Also ask students to underline each occurrence of a sensory detail.

## 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.*

## WORKSHEET

**Images From Memory**

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

1. Circle one of the words in the list below that reminds you of a memory. For example, for the words “kitchen/ bedroom” you could have a memory about making cookies in your grandmother’s kitchen or spilling a carton of milk in a friend’s kitchen or having a pillow fight in your sister’s bedroom.

*park / playground**kitchen / bedroom**sports / game**late at night / early morning**river / pool / lake**vacation / party**woods / field / yard**sunshine / snow / rain*

Create your own: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Close your eyes and try to put yourself back in that memory. Think of who is there, what is around you, what feelings the memory gives you. Then open your eyes and list as many details from your memory as you can for each of your five senses and emotions.

**SIGHT:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SOUND:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SMELL:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**TOUCH:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**TASTE:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**EMOTIONS/FEELINGS:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 8) Focused Lyric-Writing Day

### OBJECTIVES

Students will write all or part of a song that incorporates what they have written and what they have learned in previous lessons.

### VOCABULARY

plagiarism

### PREPARATION

Make copies of **Songwriting Checklist** for all students.

Additionally, at your own discretion, make copies of the following templates and worksheets according to the needs of your students:

- For students who want or need additional support for outlining a song, make copies of **Songwriting Outline Worksheet**.
- For students who need extra support in general, make copies of **Songwriting Template** (in Supplemental Materials).

**Note:** Providing this template to all students may result in formulaic songs.

- For students who may have problems generating song ideas or supporting details, make copies of **Brainstorm Wheel**, **Spider Map**, and **Sensory and Emotion Brainstorm** (in Supplemental Materials).
- For students who are writing a blues song, make copies of **Blues Song Template** (in The Blues lesson).

### STANDARDS

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### FREE WRITE (5 minutes)

### DISCUSS HOMEWORK (1 minute)

Divide class into pairs so students can share a strong image from their writing.

### BRAINSTORM (5 minutes)

**Prompt:** You have done a lot of writing over the last few days. For the next five minutes, look through your journal and underline anything that you are proud of or anything that you think you might want to use in your final song.



*Cindy Walker composed lyrics on her typewriter, one of many treasures in the collection of the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. Although she lived in Texas, she made regular visits to Nashville to pitch her songs, which she called her “babies.” She was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1997.*



**ACTIVITY** (30–35 minutes)

1. Review the following concepts from previous lessons:

- **Parts of a song:** A song must have a title, verses, a chorus, and a hook. Some songs have a bridge, which usually occurs before the last chorus and introduces a twist or new idea on the subject.
- **Title and hook:** In most songs, the title appears at least once in the chorus. The title is often the hook, the catchy phrase that makes the song easy to remember. The hook and the title usually communicate the theme.
- **Subject and theme:** The subject is the song's topic. The theme is the message.
- **Rhythm and syllables:** Each line of the verse should have about the same number of syllables. Each line of the chorus should have about the same number of syllables. For songwriting novices, having between five and eight syllables per line produces the most successful songs.
- **Rhyme:** Most songs follow a rhyme scheme. Rhymes can be exact or approximate.
- **Sensory details and images:** Lyrics paint mental pictures to communicate their theme and convey emotions.

2. Share the following information before sending students off to write:

All songwriters draw inspiration from many different sources, including other songs and songwriters. Many songwriters create songs together by co-writing. It is fine to get inspiration or help from other songwriters and friends, but it is never OK to use a song or part of a song written by someone else and claim it as your own work. If you turn in someone else's work as your own, it is considered cheating, and you will receive a failing grade. If professional songwriters steal all or part of someone else's song and sell it as their own work, this is called **plagiarism**, and it is illegal. People who commit plagiarism can be sued by the material's original creators.

**TEACHER TIP**

Allowing students to co-write their songs is an excellent way to support ESL students and students who are struggling alone. ESL students may also wish to write a song in their first language and try translating it into English.

3. Distribute and review the **Songwriting Checklist** to all students. Reserve most of class time for students to work quietly on their songs. Distribute additional templates and handouts, including the **Songwriting Template**, as needs arise. If the Blues Lesson (see p.56) was taught, pass out the **Blues Song Template** to students who are writing a blues song. Students should be encouraged to write lyrics based on their song form preference. (Not every student should write a blues song.) If students finish quickly, they should write extra verses so they can pick the best ones for their final draft.

At this point, students will be in different stages of writing. Some will have completed an outline, some may have a verse and chorus, while others might have journal entries and an idea of what they want to write. Encourage students to use the Songwriting Checklist to help them move forward.

4. As you offer support to students, consider the following points of focus:

- The content of the song is most important.
- Songs should follow a standard structure.
- Students should attempt to rhyme so their song is catchy and memorable.

## TEACHER TIP

Here are some of the most common obstacles students encounter and strategies for overcoming them:

**Not enough ideas:** Refer students back to their journals for more ideas. Provide **Brainstorm Wheel** (in Supplemental Materials) to students to generate more ideas. Provide **Sensory and Emotion Brainstorm Worksheet** and/or the **Spider Map** (also in Supplemental Materials) to help students generate more supporting details.

**Too many ideas:** Remind students to focus on one subject and then add in supporting details about that subject.

**Ideas are scattered or disorganized:** Encourage students to approach their one theme in a different way for each of the three verses. Provide the **Songwriting Outline Worksheet** to students who are struggling with organizing their ideas.

**Song looks more like a paragraph:** Praise students for having so many ideas and details. Prompt students to try dividing the ideas found in their paragraph into four lines for the verses and four lines for the chorus. Remind students that each line should have about the same number of syllables.

**Generally “stuck”:** Remind students who feel genuinely overwhelmed that their song does not have to be the best ever written and that it takes lots of time and practice to become a good songwriter. Every song or part of a song that they write will make them better at writing their next song.

Provide the **Songwriting Template** (in Supplemental Materials) only to students who need extra support.

## HOMEWORK

By the end of the class period, students should have at least one verse and a chorus. For homework, students should attempt to finish their songs. A finished song will mean something different for each student, but let students know they will be sharing their songs with a partner during the next lesson. If students finish their chorus and all their verses, they should write extra verses for their homework. Or they also may try to write another song.



*William Christopher Handy was a songwriter, composer, and music publisher. Often referred to as the “Father of the Blues,” Handy popularized blues music in the early 20th century, with hits like “Memphis Blues” and “St. Louis Blues.” Learn how to write a traditional blues lyric in **The Blues Lesson** (p.56). Photo courtesy of State Historical Society of Missouri, Arthur Witman 120mm Photograph Collection.*

## SONGWRITING CHECKLIST

## Is It Ready to Be Set to Music?

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

- ☐ I have chosen a subject or story for my song. It is: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I have written a title. It is: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I have written an outline (optional).

☐ I have written at least one verse.

☐ My verses provide the details of my song. One detail is: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I have written a chorus.

☐ The theme of my song is: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ My title appears somewhere in my chorus.

☐ I have written a bridge (optional).

☐ My song follows a rhyme scheme.

☐ This is my rhyme scheme: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ The lines in all my verses have approximately five to eight syllables.

  - How many syllables are in Verse 1? \_\_\_\_\_  
line 1                      line 2                      line 3                      line 4
  - How many syllables are in Verse 2? \_\_\_\_\_  
line 1                      line 2                      line 3                      line 4
  - How many syllables are in Verse 3? \_\_\_\_\_  
line 1                      line 2                      line 3                      line 4

☐ Each line in my chorus has approximately five to eight syllables.

  - How many syllables are in my chorus? \_\_\_\_\_  
line 1                      line 2                      line 3                      line 4

## WORKSHEET

## Songwriting Outline

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

1. What is your title? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your hook? (It could be the same as your title.) \_\_\_\_\_

3. What details will you put in your verses to support the subject? \_\_\_\_\_

Here are some ideas for details; each verse should include only one:

- Specific things you like about your topic
- How you feel about your topic
- What you do with your topic
- How you interact with your topic
- When you first saw your topic
- How your topic changed you
- Physical qualities of your topic
- Someone your topic makes you think of

Create your own. \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 1 topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Hook (in the chorus): \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 2 topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Hook (in the chorus): \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 3 topic: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Write four lines for each verse and four lines for the chorus. The chorus should include the hook and/or title in at least one line. Remember that each line should have about the same number of syllables (usually between five and eight).

## 9) Revision

### OBJECTIVES

Students will learn about the revision process as it relates to songwriting.

Students will revise their songs to meet Words & Music program standards.

Students will prepare their songs for submission to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum.

### VOCABULARY

cover songs, metaphor (review), revision, simile (review)

### PREPARATION

- Make copies of **Partner Revision Worksheet**.
- Make copies of **Songwriters' Manuscripts** (in Appendix).

**Note:** You may choose to project these instead of photocopying.

- Reserve computers or computer lab for students to type their songs.
- Make copies of **Final Lyric Assessment Rubric** (in Supplemental Materials) to use in your evaluation of each student's final work.

### STANDARDS

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

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

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

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meaning.

### FREE WRITE (5 minutes)

### BRAINSTORM (5 minutes)

Review the two figures of speech, **simile** and **metaphor**. Explain that a simile is a descriptive comparison that uses "like" or "as." A metaphor makes similar comparisons without using "like" or "as."

**Prompt:** For the final brainstorm, work with a partner to create as many similes and metaphors as you can in two minutes.

For the remaining time, allow students to share their favorite similes and metaphors with the class.

### ACTIVITY (35 minutes)

#### 1. Share with students:

Just like any other style of writing, songwriting requires **revision** to make the song the best it can be. To revise lyrics, songwriters may do something as simple as swapping out a few words, or they could rewrite whole verses or the chorus. They have to be brave enough to accept feedback from other people and to consider changing words and phrases they may have thought were perfect. Professional songwriters often keep revising their work, even up to the last minute. Bob Dylan, for example, originally wrote the song "Tangled Up in Blue" in third person (from someone else's point of view) but then decided to change it to first person (from the "I" point of view) when he recorded it.

## TEACHER TIP

Encourage students to try writing their songs from a different point of view. A third-person perspective (in the voice of someone else) can allow students more creative license than writing in first person (as themselves).

2. Share examples of **Songwriters' Manuscripts** that demonstrate revision.
3. **Preparing students for the songwriter workshop:** Remind students that one reason they will want to polish their work is that the Words & Music unit culminates in a workshop experience with a professional songwriter. The writer will set a selection of student lyrics to music and perform those fully-formed songs for the class. Prepare students for this experience by letting them know:
  - Not all students' songs will be arranged and performed by the professional.
  - This is a co-writing experience, since the professional songwriter is putting the students' lyrics to music. Therefore, the professional may take creative license with some of the lyrics or structural elements to make the words work better with music.
  - It is not uncommon for lyrics to be set to a variety of musical styles. Artists sometimes record **cover songs**, or remakes of other artist's songs, often arranging the same lyrics to a different style of music (genre). Students should be encouraged to embrace this concept if their musical vision for their lyrics differs from the choices made by the professional songwriter.

4. Distribute and review the **Partner Revision Worksheet**.

Students should take ten to 15 minutes to thoughtfully complete the revision worksheets. Remind them to take their task seriously; their objective is to offer constructive feedback that will improve their partner's work, not tear it down.

5. After students finish the Partner Revision Worksheet, they should follow its guidance and, if need be, make final changes to their lyrics. They should then type or neatly print their lyrics and turn them in according to the assignment deadline. Please ensure that students follow these **guidelines for lyric submission to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum**:

- Lyrics must be typed or clearly printed (typed is preferred).
- Lyrics should adhere to the following formatting requirements:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> 12-point font, 1.5 spaced	<input type="checkbox"/> Chorus indented once
<input type="checkbox"/> Left justified (flush left)	<input type="checkbox"/> Bridge indented twice
- Each set of lyrics should contain the following header information:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Student name(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher name(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> School name	<input type="checkbox"/> Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade level	

Students may include a note to the professional songwriter if they have a preferred song style. (This issue is also addressed in the last question on the revision handout.)



**TEACHER TIP**

If students finish early, ask them to write in their journal five to ten similes or metaphors that could fit in their song. They may want to revise their lyrics to include one or more of these new images.

6. Use the **Final Lyric Assessment Rubric** (in Supplemental Materials) to evaluate students' final lyrics.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTION OPPORTUNITY**

Speak to the visual art teacher about a joint project that would allow students to create album covers or other work to illustrate their lyrics.

**SUBMITTING LYRICS**

**Lyrics are due at least two weeks before the scheduled Words & Music songwriter workshop.** Compile the lyrics of each class into one document and attach it to an email. Send to [Lyrics@CountryMusicHallofFame.org](mailto:Lyrics@CountryMusicHallofFame.org)

**EVALUATING THE PROGRAM**

Your feedback is essential in our measurement of program outcomes to ensure Words & Music effectively meets your classroom needs and our program goals. We ask that you and your students complete the **Teacher Evaluation and Student Reflection** following the unit (see Lesson 10).

- Your students should complete the **Student Reflection** after their lyric submission but before the songwriter workshop at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicStudent](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicStudent).
- Please complete the **Teacher Evaluation** after completing the Words & Music unit and the songwriter session at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicTeacher](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicTeacher).

## PARTNER REVISION WORKSHEET

**Part 1: Partner Review and Feedback**

Songwriter's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read your partner's song lyrics.
2. Underline all the words that rhyme at the end of lines.
3. Count the syllables in each line, and write the number at the end. Remember to count the syllables as a singer would pronounce it (for example, "every" would count as two syllables because it is sung "evry").
4. What is the subject? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the theme? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What evidence makes you think this is the theme? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What line or lines do you like the best and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What line or lines could be more descriptive and would benefit from the use of a simile, metaphor, or sensory detail?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Return the worksheet and the lyrics to the songwriter.

## PARTNER REVISION WORKSHEET

**Part 2: Songwriter Feedback Response**

Songwriter's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Partner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did your partner find rhyming words at the end of most of your lines? Y / N
  - If “no,” consider adding more rhyming words.
2. Look at the number of syllables per line in your verses. Is the number about the same from line to line? Y / N
  - If “no,” consider rephrasing the lines.
3. Is the number of syllables about the same in all the verses? Y / N
  - If “no,” consider rephrasing the verses.
4. Did your partner correctly identify the theme? Y / N
  - If “no,” consider rewriting parts of your chorus to clarify your theme.
5. Did your partner identify a line or lines from your song that could be improved with an inventive simile, metaphor, or sensory detail? Y / N
  - If “yes,” try using a simile, metaphor, or a sensory detail to rewrite the line or lines. Remember to count your syllables again when changing a line.
6. Check to make sure your song has the following elements:
  - ☐ Title
  - ☐ Chorus
  - ☐ Hook
  - ☐ Verse(s)
7. How do you imagine the music to your song? Would it be fast or slow? Would it be country, rock, blues, rap, jazz, samba, or something else?

---

---

---

---

---

## 10) Student Reflection and Careers in Songwriting

### OBJECTIVES

Students will reflect on their songwriting experience.

Students will be introduced to careers in songwriting.

### VOCABULARY

copyright, publisher, royalty

### PREPARATION

- Ensure students have access to computers or devices. The internet is needed to complete both the online Student Reflection and the career research activity.
- Students will reflect on the lyric-writing process by completing the **online Student Reflection** at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicStudent](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicStudent). A student handout with a QR code and website link is included for convenience.
- Teachers will complete the **online Teacher Evaluation** at

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicTeacher](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicTeacher). If more than one teacher at your school taught the Words & Music lessons, each teacher should complete the online Teacher Evaluation.

### STANDARDS

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions.

### FREE WRITE (5 minutes)

### GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

1. Ask students the following questions to initiate a discussion about their songwriting experience:

- Did you enjoy your songwriting experience? Why or why not?
- What was difficult about the songwriting process?
- What surprised you about songwriting?
- How did you feel when you completed your lyric? A sense of accomplishment? Surprised at what you created? Nervous to share your song with others?
- What did you learn about country music that you didn't know before?

### REFLECTION (10 minutes)

Students will reflect on the lyric-writing process by completing the **online Student Reflection**

at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicStudent](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicStudent). A student handout with a QR Code and website link is included for convenience (see p. 55).

### BRAINSTORM (2 minutes)

Prompt: In your journal, write down as many jobs or careers in music as you can think of in one minute. Underline or circle any careers that you think are related to songwriting. Share a few careers with a partner when you are finished.

**ACTIVITY (20 minutes)**

1. Students may wonder how songwriters make money. Explain to students that a **copyright** gives songwriters the legal right to reproduce, distribute, and perform their original songs. Songwriters can grant those rights to others, such as a music publisher. Many professional songwriters sign a publishing deal with a music publisher. **Publishers** help songwriters by getting their songs recorded or “cut” by recording artists, thus generating income when the songs are streamed, sold on CD or vinyl, or used in other ways like in commercials, television, movies, or video games. Music publishers share a portion of such income with the songwriters. The portion of the income paid to songwriters is called a **royalty**. When a song is recorded and used, there are many different people and companies who may receive part of the income, including not only the songwriter and publisher, but also the artist, record label, producer, mixer, manager, and others.

**TEACHER TIP**

Any original song written has automatic copyright protection from the moment it is created and put in a “tangible” form (such as writing down the lyrics or recording the song). When you write down your lyrics or record it, you have automatic copyright protection. A copyright is an automatic right upon creation; you do not need to register it with the United States Copyright Office (or mail it to yourself, etc.). Songwriters can mark their song lyrics with the copyright symbol (©) and include the date of creation. For more information, see [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).

2. Share the following with students:

There are many careers in the music business related to songwriting. Some careers are entirely creative—as in, jobs that involve the creation of music, which means writing the songs. For example, a staff writer is a songwriter who works for a publisher to create songs for commercial release. There are also other jobs that support and deal with the business aspects, like lawyers and accountants.

3. Have students conduct internet research on careers in the music business specific to songwriting.

Careers may include, but are not limited to:

- Entertainment Attorney
- Licensing Representative
- Lyricist
- Music Producer
- Music Therapist
- Music Teacher/Professor
- Performing Songwriter/Singer-Songwriter
- Publisher
- Recording Artist
- Song Plugger
- Staff Writer

Students should choose one career to research and record the following in their journals:

- Name of the career
- A description of the career
- Identify important skills and/or education needed for the career
- How does this career connect to songwriting?

### WEBSITES

The following websites provide information on various careers in songwriting:

#### Berklee

[www.berklee.edu/careers](http://www.berklee.edu/careers)

This website provides a comprehensive list and thorough descriptions of careers related to songwriting in business, composition, design, education, health and wellness, performance, and production.

#### Careers in Music

<https://www.careersinmusic.com/music-careers/>

This website explores careers related to songwriting with information on salary, career path, experience and skills, and education and training. Students can also explore music career paths based on interest using a fun, interactive questionnaire. (See “What are you most interested in?” at the top of the website.)

4. Assign students to small groups, then assign each group an industry in music as listed on the websites (i.e., business, composition, education, health, performance, production, etc.). In each group/industry, students can choose or roll a die to decide who has which career in that industry. Students will research and present their career to their group. After each student has presented their career, students will discuss how all careers relate and work together in the music business.

### TEACHER TIP

If time allows, students can create a presentation using computer software (like PowerPoint) to present their chosen careers to the class. If a student has a parent or relative in a related career, invite them to visit and discuss their job with the class.

### HOMEWORK

Assign students to write questions in their journals to ask the songwriter during the upcoming workshop. Questions can be about lyric writing, playing an instrument, performing live, the music business, or other related topics. Encourage students to think of inquiring questions beginning with “who,” “what,” “when,” “why,” and “how.” Students should bring their questions to the songwriter workshop.

### HELP US HELP YOU

Teacher feedback is essential in our measurement of program outcomes to ensure Words & Music effectively meets classroom needs and learning goals. Please complete the **online Teacher Evaluation** upon completion of the unit, after the songwriter session, at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicTeacher](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicTeacher) (QR code to the right). All teachers who participated in Words & Music should complete the teacher evaluation. Thank you for sharing this request and the assessment link with any additional teachers at your school who instructed Words & Music. We greatly appreciate your efforts in reporting accurate data, enabling this award-winning program to continue to be free or low cost for you and your students for years to come.







## Student Reflection

Congratulations on writing a song! Reflect on the lyric-writing process by completing the **online Student Reflection** before the songwriter program. Scan the QR code or visit the website below:



[www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicStudent](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WordsMusicStudent)

## The Blues

### SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON

*The Blues is a supplemental lesson that is intended to be taught between Lessons 7 and 8 in the Words & Music unit.*

#### OBJECTIVES

Students will explore the history and elements of traditional blues songs.

Students will apply their knowledge of blues to writing their own traditional blues lyrics.

#### VOCABULARY

blues, holler, work song, verse (review), 12-bar blues

#### PREPARATION

- Make copies of the **Blues Styles Across the United States Worksheet**, **“Everyday I Have the Blues” Worksheet**, and **“Hound Dog” Worksheet**.
- Locate audio or video versions of “Everyday I Have the Blues” performed by Memphis Slim and “Hound Dog” performed by Big Mama Thornton.

#### STANDARDS

##### English Language Arts

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

Determine central ideas or themes of a text, analyze their development, summarize key points.

##### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5

Analyze the structure of texts including how portions relate to each other and the whole.

##### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5

Strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

##### Tennessee Social Studies

##### SSP.01, SSP.05, 3.04, 3.10, 5.14, 5.51

\*See page 66 for standard descriptions.

### INTRODUCTION

**The Blues** lesson is divided into two parts. In **Part I: Blues History**, students will explore the history of blues styles across the United States. In **Part II: Blues Form**, students will analyze blues lyrics and learn how to write their own traditional blues lyrics. Depending on class time and needs, Part I and Part II can be taught together in one day or over two separate days.

### BRAINSTORM (5 minutes)

**Prompt:** Think of times when you felt sad, disappointed, treated unfairly, or when things didn't go your way. In your journal, list as many of these experiences as you can. Select one of these experiences and write a detailed account of it. Describe what happened, the way you felt, the way you dealt with it, and any other details relating to the experience.

### TEACHER TIP

Allow students to volunteer sharing their journal entries. Create a safe environment by setting classroom expectations for being kind and respectful to others as their peers share personal experiences. By sharing, students will develop social and emotional learning competencies such as self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills.

### GROUP DISCUSSION (5 minutes)

Divide students into small groups and give them 30 to 60 seconds to discuss the following questions. After each question, let the groups share their answers with the whole class.

- What is the blues?
- Who writes blues songs?
- Why do people like blues songs?
- Are you familiar with any blues artists?
- What makes the blues different from other music genres or styles of music?

## ACTIVITY

## PART I: BLUES HISTORY (20–25 minutes)

1. Distribute the **Blues Styles Across the United States Worksheet**. Students will use the worksheet to identify key words or draw a picture that best describe each blues style discussed in class. Share the information below with students. **Refer to the Teacher Resource Portal for the audio/video examples and accompanying PowerPoint, which includes the history information below.**

**Blues** songs often tell stories of misfortune, regret, and overcoming bad luck. This style of music has its roots in African-American history. In the 1800s, enslaved individuals would collectively sing **work songs** as they were forced to work long, hard days often in fields. A song leader would sing a short improvised melody (call), and the workers would answer with a single repeated melody (response). Enslaved people also sang **hollers**, which sounded a lot like work songs, but were sang alone, rather than as a group.

The origins of blues music can be traced to the Mississippi Delta during the late 1800s and early 1900s. From there, it spread to other areas of the country, where the sound evolved due to musicians adding musical elements popular in their regions.

*Examples of different blues styles across the United States include:*

The **Mississippi Delta Blues** are considered the oldest style of blues, originating in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Most Delta blues records feature singers accompanying themselves on guitar. Usually, they play a basic repeated musical pattern, known as **12-bar blues**. (See Part II for more information.) The lyrics typically used an AAB line pattern and were often about failed relationships, life on the road, and other emotional topics. In Mississippi, blues music venues were train stations, street corners, barns, and other informal locations.

*Example: “Pony Blues” by Charley Patton*

Perhaps no other region combines as many styles into their blues music as **Texas Blues**. In the early 1900s, Texans often kept elements of the Mississippi Delta Blues (i.e., AAB line pattern and **12-bar blues**) and combined it with their own folk and spiritual tunes. Singers like Blind Lemon Jefferson found a way to accompany long, free form, holler-like melodies with freely strummed guitar chords. Additionally, Texas blues musicians added in musical elements from around the world including Latin rhythms and polkas.

*Example: “Match Box Blues” by Blind Lemon Jefferson*

Many **Memphis Blues** musicians moved from the Mississippi Delta to escape the oppression of field work. Memphis offered opportunities for black businesses and entertainment on its famous Beale Street. Musicians could also perform at house parties, corner saloons, traveling tent shows, or in jazz bands. In order to compete with large performance ensembles (like W.C. Handy’s band), artists often performed as a duo and developed a distinct musical sound where one guitar played high treble chords and melodies while the other played low bass lines—a sound still present today.

*Example: “Beale Town Bound” by the Beale Street Sheiks duo*

**St. Louis Blues** soaked up diverse music styles from the Mississippi Delta, ragtime from local artist Scott Joplin (composer of “Maple Leaf Rag” and “The Entertainer”), and jazz influences from New Orleans. In 1914, W.C. Handy published his song “St. Louis Blues” which would become one of the most popular blues songs in history.

*Example: “St. Louis Blues” by Bessie Smith*

When you think of **Chicago Blues**, think of a bigger band and electricity! This style developed in the 1950s and added several instruments to the typical Delta blues style, including electric guitar, bass guitar played with an amp, a piano, a miked harmonica, and sometimes a horn section (trumpet, trombone, and saxophone).

*Example: “Trouble No More” by Muddy Waters*

## PART II: BLUES FORM (20–25 minutes)

2. Distribute the “**Everyday I Have the Blues**” **Worksheet**, and listen to a recording of the song by Memphis Slim. Have students discuss the following questions with a partner, then share their answers with the class:
- What does the artist mean by “Everyday I Have the Blues?”
  - What is the subject and theme of the song?
  - What evidence from the song supports your position?
  - How is the form or parts of this song different than songs you listen to today?



*John “Peter” Chatman (1915–1988), also known as Memphis Slim, recorded over 500 songs and is widely regarded as one of the world’s greatest blues pianists.*



*B.B. King (1925–2015) earned the nickname “The King of the Blues” and is considered one of the most influential blues artists in history.*

3. Share with students:

When you “have the blues,” it means you feel sad, regretful, down on your luck, or betrayed. Although blues music often deals with personal struggles, it’s also about overcoming hard times, saying how you feel, venting your frustration, and having fun while doing it! Unlike most popular or country music that follow a verse-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-chorus music form, blues songs typically use multiple verses and no chorus. Traditional blues songs typically follow a three-line **verse** with an AAB line pattern, which is sang over a basic repeated musical pattern called **12-bar blues**. This form of blues typically has the following lyrical elements:

**A. Line 1—State the problem, situation, or issue.**

**A. Line 2—Repeat the first line.**

**B. Line 3—Response to the first two lines, which:**

- States a solution or consequence.
- Is longer in length to the first two lines.
- May contain up to the same number of syllables as the first two lines.
- Rhymes with the first two repeated lines.

**12-bar blues** refers to a chord progression that is 12 bars (or measures) long. It can be divided into three four-bar segments that follow the AAB line pattern of a verse.

4. Review the rhyme pattern of “Everyday I Have the Blues” by completing step 3 on the “**Everyday I Have the Blues**” Worksheet.



5. Share the following information with students:

In the early days of the music industry, “covering,” or recording someone else’s song, became a standard practice with record labels. Artists would often record another artist’s song and release it to compete with the original, or they would record it in a different style of music (genre). The earliest version of “Everyday I Have the Blues” was written and performed by Aaron “Pinetop” Sparks and his brother Milton Sparks in 1939. The song became a blues standard when Memphis Slim reworked and recorded it under the title “Nobody Knows Me” in 1949. The song was later recorded by many blues artists, including the Count Basie Orchestra with Joe Williams (1955) and B.B. King (1955).

In the 1930s, many blues musicians adopted faster musical styles and beats. As the beat changed and the music gained more listeners, popular music performed by black artists was identified by Billboard magazine as “rhythm & blues,” or R&B, in 1949. Male R&B artists like Fats Domino and Little Richard dominated the charts in the early 1950s. One of the great female artists at the time was Willie Mae “Big Mama” Thornton. In 1953, she recorded the hit single “Hound Dog,” which topped the R&B charts. “Hound Dog” was later reworked and covered by Elvis Presley, who helped introduce listeners to a new style of music called rock & roll.

6. Distribute the **“Hound Dog” Worksheet** and listen to the version recorded by Big Mama Thornton.

Students will discuss the following questions in small groups, then discuss as a class:

- What are the differences and similarities between “Hound Dog” and “Everyday I Have the Blues”?
- What elements of traditional blues songs are found in “Hound Dog”?

7. Students will complete the **“Hound Dog” Worksheet**, by writing a blues lyric writing prompt.

### TEACHER TIP

If time allows, listen to “Everyday I Have the Blues” by B.B. King (1955) and “Hound Dog” by Elvis Presley (1956). Compare and contrast their recordings to the examples that were covered in the lesson. Draw students’ attention to the similarities and differences in lyrics, music instrumentation, and performance style. This activity also allows for discussion on cover songs and how artists sometimes record and perform other artists’ music.

### HOMEWORK

Distribute the **Songwriter Quotes Worksheet** and review the instructions:

Read the quotes from professional blues songwriters. Underline or highlight any key words that explain the blues. Using at least one of the key words you identified, create your own definition or explanation of the blues.

### TEACHER TIP

If time allows, it may be helpful to do the first quote together, as an example. Depending on the age and reading level of the students, you may want to assign only a portion of the quotes.

### FOCUSED LYRIC WRITING DAY

After teaching this lesson, students are ready for focused lyric writing and revision, (see lessons 8 and 9). Students will apply what they have learned in the blues lesson to writing traditional AAB blues lyrics using the **Blues Song Template** or a traditional song lyric using the **Songwriting Template**. Students should be encouraged to write lyrics based on their song form preference, but not every student should write a blues song.



**TEACHER TIP**

Remind students that although blues music often deals with personal struggles, it's also about expressing feelings, venting frustration, and having fun while doing it! For their blues song, students do not need to write about death or traumatic experiences—students should feel free to write about anything!



*Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton (1926–1984) was an American R&B singer who first recorded "Hound Dog" in 1952.*



*Elvis Presley (1935–1977), commonly referred to as "The King of Rock & Roll," was one of the most significant cultural icons of the twentieth century and also recorded "Hound Dog."*

## WORKSHEET

**Blues Styles Across the United States**

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

Write a key word or draw a picture that best describes each blues style discussed in class.

**MISSISSIPPI DELTA BLUES****TEXAS BLUES****MEMPHIS BLUES****ST. LOUIS BLUES****CHICAGO BLUES****THE BLUES**

## WORKSHEET

**“Everyday I Have the Blues”**

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

1. Listen to “Everyday I Have the Blues.” Read along using the lyrics below.
2. Discuss the following questions with a partner, then share your answers with the class:
  - What does the artist mean by “Everyday I Have the Blues”?
  - What is the subject and theme of the song?
  - What evidence from the song supports your position?
  - How is the form or parts of this song different than songs you listen to today?
3. Identify the line pattern of each verse by placing the correct letter (A or B) in the blanks provided.

**“Everyday I Have the Blues”***John “Peter” Chatman (Memphis Slim)***VERSE 1**

Everyday, everyday I have the blues \_\_\_\_\_

Everyday, everyday I have the blues \_\_\_\_\_

When you see me worried baby, because it’s you I hate to lose \_\_\_\_\_

**VERSE 2**

Oh, nobody loves me, nobody seems to care \_\_\_\_\_

Yes nobody loves me, nobody seems to care \_\_\_\_\_

Speaking of bad luck and trouble, well you know I had my share \_\_\_\_\_

**VERSE 3**

I’m gonna pack my suitcase, move on down the line \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I’m gonna pack my suitcase, move on down the line \_\_\_\_\_

Where there ain’t nobody worried, and there ain’t nobody crying \_\_\_\_\_

## WORKSHEET

**“Hound Dog”**

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

1. Listen to “Hound Dog” by Willie Mae “Big Mama” Thornton. Read along using the lyrics below.

2. Discuss the following questions in small groups, then discuss as a class:

- What are the differences and similarities between “Hound Dog” and “Everyday I Have the Blues”?
- What elements of traditional blues songs are found in “Hound Dog”?

**“Hound Dog”***Jerry Leiber / Mike Stoller*

You ain't nothin' but a hound dog, been snoopin' 'round my door  
 You ain't nothin' but a hound dog, been snoopin' 'round my door  
 You can wag your tail but I ain't gonna feed you no more

You told me you was high-class, but I could see through that  
 Yes, you told me you was high-class, but I could see through that  
 And daddy, I know you ain't no real cool cat

You ain't nothin' but a hound dog, been snoopin' 'round my door  
 You just an old hound dog, been snoopin' 'round my door  
 You can wag your tail but I ain't gonna feed you no more

You made me feel so blue, you made me weep and moan  
 You made me feel so blue, well you made me weep and moan  
 'Cause you ain't looking for a woman all you lookin' is for a home

You ain't nothin' but a hound dog, been snoopin' 'round my door  
 You ain't nothin' but a hound dog, been snoopin' 'round my door  
 You can wag your tail but I ain't gonna feed you no more

**NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!**

Fill in the blanks to write your own blues lyrics using the prompt below.

A. I woke up this morning, and \_\_\_\_\_  
 (State the problem/what happened)

A. I woke up this morning, and \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Repeat the line above)

B. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (State the solution or consequence, and rhyme with Line A)

## WORKSHEET

**Blues Song Template**

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

Song title: \_\_\_\_\_

**FIRST VERSE**

A. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

**SECOND VERSE**

A. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

**THIRD VERSE**

A. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

**FOURTH VERSE (optional)**

A. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

## WORKSHEET

## Songwriter Quotes

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

Read the quotes from professional blues songwriters. Underline or highlight any key words that explain the blues. Using at least one of the key words you identified, create your own definition or explanation of the blues.

1. “The blues are the roots and the other musics are the fruits. It’s better keeping the roots alive, because it means better fruits from now on. The blues are the roots of all American music. As long as American music survives, so will the blues.” —**Willie Dixon**
2. “White or black. Rich or poor. If you ever had your heart broken, you have the right to sing the blues!” —**Big Mama Thornton**
3. “The blues has lasted because the blues is about reality. Life is blue. Life ends. Sorrow is certain. Pain can’t be avoided. The blues lays it out. But as you sing the blues, and as you listen to the blues, something happens to you. In the middle of songs that have some of the saddest stories ever told, you feel more alive than ever. That’s the strength of the blues. That’s the miracle—watching the blues chase the blues away.” —**Jimmy Scott**
4. “If I was a rich man, had all the money I needed, and suddenly all that money left, my feeling would be what they call the blues.” —**Henry “Mule” Townsend**
5. “We write according to the facts of life, everyday life. If you live and die here, you got a part of the blues in you. Something you have to get up to do, it don’t work, that’s what the blues is all about. I think a person will have the blues as long as he lives, but some people just don’t want to bring it out like we do.” —**Buddy Guy**
6. “... The original blues songs are deep, emotional melodies, bespeaking a troubled heart.” —**Bessie Smith**
7. “There are happy blues, sad blues, lonesome blues, red-hot blues, mad blues, and loving blues. Blues is a testimony to the fullness of life.” —**Corey Harris**
8. “There’s a lot of things that give you the blues, that give me the blues, that give any man the blues: It’s somewhere down the line that you have been hurt someplace. I mean, it’s no certain type of hurtin’, but you have been hurt someplace and you get to playin’ the blues that reaches. And so that’s why when I sing the blues, I sing it with the big feelin’. I really means it.” —**John Lee Hooker**
9. “The blues? It’s the mother of American music. That’s what it is—the source.” —**B.B. King**

**MY DEFINITION OF THE BLUES**



## The Blues Lesson Standards

The Blues lesson addresses the following

### TENNESSEE SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION
<b>SSP.01</b>	Gather information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including: printed materials (e.g., literary texts, newspapers, autobiographies, speeches, interviews, letters, personal journals); graphic representations (e.g., maps, timelines, charts, political cartoons, photographs, artwork); field observations/landscape analysis; artifacts; media and technology sources.
<b>SSP.05</b>	Develop historical awareness by: recognizing how and why historical accounts change over time; perceiving and presenting past events and issues as they might have been experienced by the people of the time, with historical empathy rather than present-mindedness; evaluating how unique circumstances of time and place create context and contribute to action and reaction; Identifying patterns of continuity and change over time, making connections to the present.
<b>3.04</b>	Examine major political features on globes and maps, including: boundaries, cities, highways, railroads, and roads.
<b>3.10</b>	Identify and locate major cities in the U.S., including: Chicago; New York City; Los Angeles; Seattle; Miami; Washington, D.C.
<b>5.14</b>	Examine the growth of popular culture during the “Roaring Twenties” with respect to the following: music, clothing, and entertainment; automobiles and appliances; Harlem Renaissance.
<b>5.51</b>	Discuss the development of the music industry in Tennessee: including (T.C.A. § 49-6-1028): country music (e.g., Grand Ole Opry, WSM, and the Carter family); blues music (e.g., W.C. Handy and Bessie Smith); rock ‘n’ roll (e.g., Elvis Presley, Stax Records, and Sun Studio).

## Common Core Curriculum Standards

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION	LESSON(S)
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1</b>	Read closely, make logical inferences, cite textual evidence to support claims	1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2</b>	Determine central ideas or themes of a text, analyze their development, summarize key points	1, 2, 4, 9
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4</b>	Interpret words and phrases as used in a text, analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone	5, 6, 7
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5</b>	Analyze the structure of texts including how portions relate to each other and the whole	2, 3, 6
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7</b>	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words	7, 10
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9</b>	Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics, compare authors approach	4
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.3</b>	Apply knowledge of language to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening	4
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.5</b>	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meaning	8, 9
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4</b>	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience	8
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5</b>	Strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach	2, 9
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.7</b>	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions	1

### THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS ARE ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES OF THE UNIT:

<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1</b>	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.10</b>	Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences

## Music and Arts Standards

Words & Music addresses the following

### TENNESSEE MUSIC STANDARDS:

<b>Foundation R1:</b>	Perceive and analyze artistic work.
<b>Foundation R2:</b>	Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
<b>Foundation Cn1:</b>	Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to artistic endeavors.
<b>Foundation Cn2:</b>	Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context.

Words & Music addresses the following

### NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION STANDARDS:

<b>Common Anchor #7:</b>	Analyze how the structure and context of varied musical works inform the response.
<b>Common Anchor #8:</b>	Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators'/performers' expressive intent.
<b>Common Anchor #10:</b>	Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.
<b>Common Anchor #11:</b>	Relate musical ideas and works with varied context to deepen understanding.

Words & Music addresses the following

### NATIONAL CORE ARTS ANCHOR STANDARDS:

<b>Anchor Standard #1:</b>	Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
<b>Anchor Standard #2:</b>	Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
<b>Anchor Standard #3:</b>	Refine and complete artistic work.
<b>Anchor Standard #7:</b>	Perceive and analyze artistic work.
<b>Anchor Standard #8:</b>	Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
<b>Anchor Standard #10:</b>	Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
<b>Anchor Standard #11:</b>	Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

## Social & Emotional Learning Standards

Words & Music addresses the following

### **SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS:**

<b>Self-Awareness:</b>	1A. Demonstrate an awareness of my emotions. 1B. Demonstrate an awareness of my personal qualities and interests.
<b>Self-Management:</b>	2A. Understand and use strategies for managing my emotions and behaviors constructively.
<b>Social Awareness:</b>	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.
<b>Relationship Skills:</b>	4A. Use positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.
<b>Responsible Decision-Making:</b>	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.

## Supplemental Materials

<b>MATERIAL</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
<b>Pre-Unit Assessment Rubric</b>	to be used with "Try a Song" Worksheet
<b>Final Lyric Assessment Rubric</b>	to assess students' final lyrics
<b>Songwriting Template</b>	to support struggling songwriters
<b>Spider Map</b>	to help students generate more supporting details
<b>Brainstorm Wheel</b>	for students who need help settling on a song idea
<b>Sensory and Emotion Brainstorm</b>	to help students generate more supporting details
<b>Songwriter Manuscripts</b>	to illustrate revision
<b>Songwriter Quotes Sources</b>	to reference sources of songwriter quotes

## Pre-Unit Assessment Rubric • Lesson 1

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

Use this rubric to score student pre-assessments at the beginning of the unit. This rubric should be used to provide a baseline before beginning the Words & Music unit and is not intended for student feedback. At the end of the Words & Music unit, this rubric can be compared to the Final Lyric Assessment Rubric to assess learning. **Scores will be submitted to the Museum following the unit using the online Teacher Evaluation (see Lesson 10 for instructions).**

**Note:** Words & Music is grant-funded and dependent on Teacher Evaluations and Student Reflections in order to secure funding. The Museum appreciates your efforts in reporting accurate data so this award-winning program can be available to you and your students for free or low cost.

Level	Skill	Yes	No
1	Song has a title		
1	Song has a chorus		
1	Song has at least one verse		
1	Each line of the verse contains about the same number of syllables		
1	All verses contain the same number of lines		
1	Each line of the chorus contains about the same number of syllables		
1	Chorus repeats itself (is not different each time)		
2	If the songwriter intended to rhyme, the song maintains a consistent rhyme scheme		
2	Verses contain supporting details		
2	Title, chorus, hook, and theme relate to each other		
2	Song contains a theme		
3	Song demonstrates a grasp of exact and approximate rhyme		
3	Song includes one or more descriptive images, similes, or metaphors		

### ASSESSMENT SCALE

**Basic:** Student achieves at least five Level 1 skills.

**Proficient:** Student achieves at least six Level 1 skills and at least three Level 2 skills.

**Advanced:** Student achieves all Level 1 skills, at least four Level 2 skills, and both Level 3 skills.

## Final Lyric Assessment Rubric • Lesson 9

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

Use this rubric to evaluate the final lyrics at the completion of the Words & Music unit. **Scores will be submitted to the Museum following the unit using the online Teacher Evaluation (see Lesson 10 for instructions).**

**Note:** Words & Music is grant-funded and dependent on Teacher Evaluations and Student Reflections in order to secure funding. The Museum appreciates your efforts in reporting accurate data so this award-winning program can be available to you and your students for free or low cost.

Level	Skill	Yes	No
1	Song has a title		
1	Song has a chorus		
1	Song has at least one verse		
1	Each line of the verse contains about the same number of syllables		
1	All verses contain the same number of lines		
1	Each line of the chorus contains about the same number of syllables		
1	Chorus repeats itself (is not different each time)		
2	If the songwriter intended to rhyme, the song maintains a consistent rhyme scheme		
2	Verses contain supporting details		
2	Title, chorus, hook, and theme relate to each other		
2	Song contains a theme		
3	Song demonstrates a grasp of exact and approximate rhyme		
3	Song includes one or more descriptive images, similes, or metaphors		

### ASSESSMENT SCALE

**Basic:** Student achieves at least five Level 1 skills.

**Proficient:** Student achieves at least six Level 1 skills and at least three Level 2 skills.

**Advanced:** Student achieves all Level 1 skills, at least four Level 2 skills, and both Level 3 skills.

Students who do not achieve at least five Level 1 skills should make additional corrections to the lyrics before submitting their work to the professional songwriter.



## WORKSHEET

**Songwriting Template • Lesson 8**

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

**SONG TITLE:** \_\_\_\_\_**VERSE 1**

_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable

**CHORUS**

_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable

**VERSE 2**

_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable

**BRIDGE (optional)**

_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable

**VERSE 3 (optional)**

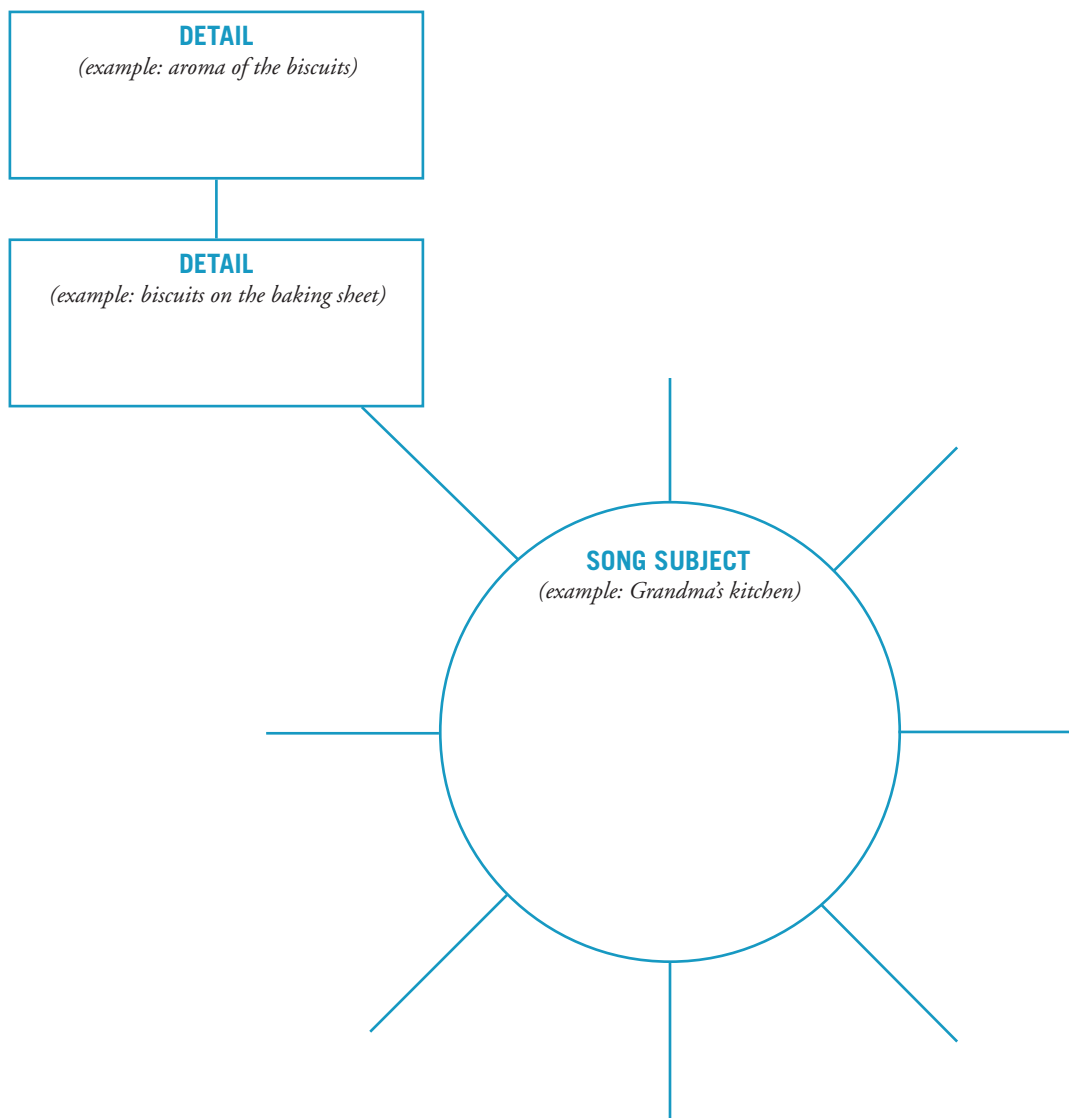
_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable
_____	_____	:syllable

## WORKSHEET

## Spider Map • Lesson 8

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

Brainstorming with a spider map helps you to add strong images to your lyrics that relate to your subject. Write your subject or topic in the circle and add branches for every detail that comes to mind. You can create branches off the details, too.

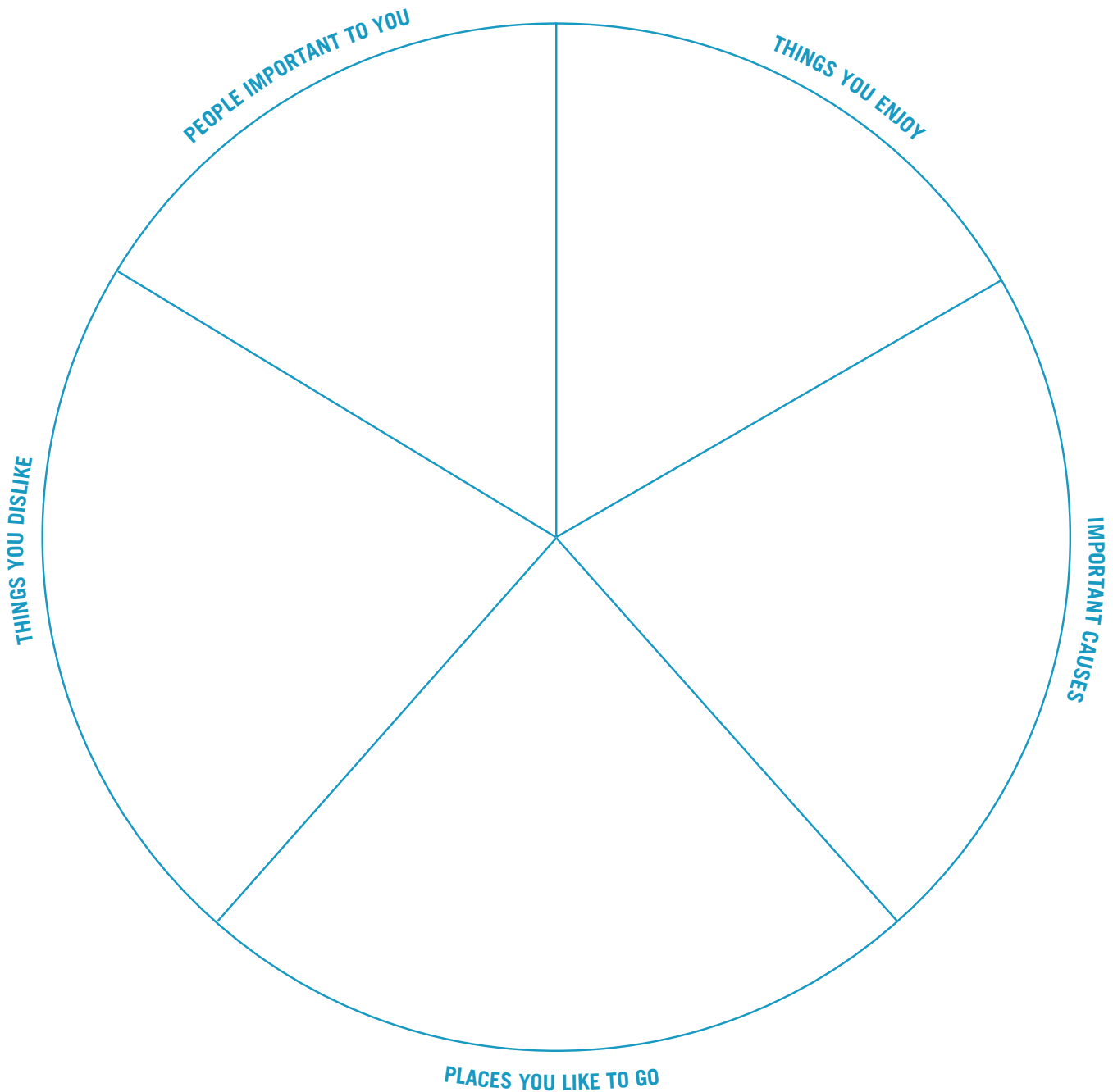


## WORKSHEET

**Brainstorm Wheel • Lesson 8**

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

Fill in the wedges of the pie chart to help generate ideas for your song.



## WORKSHEET

**Sensory and Emotion Brainstorm • Lesson 8**

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

Remember to use all your senses to incorporate details into your song. Close your eyes and imagine yourself in your song. What sensory details could you include to paint a stronger picture for your listener? What emotions will you draw upon to create images?

**THINGS I SEE:****THINGS I FEEL FROM TOUCH:****THINGS I HEAR:****THINGS I SMELL:****THINGS I TASTE:****MY EMOTIONS/FEELINGS:**

## SONGWRITER MANUSCRIPT

## "Chasin' That Neon Rainbow" (excerpt) • Lesson 9

Alan Jackson and Jim McBride

wanted  
 to be  
 for the  
 bar  
 bar  
 singing  
 in  
 the  
 kitchen  
 singin'  
 in  
 car  
 human  
 junkbox

Daddy won a radio  
 Tuned it to a country show  
~~I was rockin' to a different station on an old fiddle guitar~~  
 I was rockin' in the cradle  
 To the ~~edge~~ of a steel guitar  
 Momma used to sing to me  
 Taught me that sweet harmony  
 Now she worries cause she never thought  
~~I would ever~~  
 I'd ever really take it this far  
 I'm singin' in the bar  
~~Chasin'~~ Chasin' that neon rainbow  
 & livin' that honky tonk dream  
 Chasin' that neon rainbow  
 & livin' that honky tonk dream



## SONGWRITER MANUSCRIPT

## "Gentle on My Mind" (excerpt) • Lesson 9

John Hartford

ITS KNOWING THAT YOUR DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN  
 & YOUR PATH IS FREE TO WALK  
 THAT MAKES ME TEND TO LEAVE MY SLEEPING BAG  
 ROLLED UP & STASHED BEHIND YOUR COUCH  
 & IT'S KNOWING I'M NOT SHACKLED BY FORGOTTEN WORDS  
 AND BONDS, OR THE INK STAINS THAT HAVE  
 DRIED UP ON SOME LINE  
 THAT KEEPS YOU ON THE BACKROADS BY THE RIVERS  
 OF MY MEMORIES, AND KEEPS YOU EVER  
 GENTLE ON MY MIND

ITS NOT CLINGING TO THE ROCKS & IVY PLANTED  
 ON SOME COLUMN NOW THAT BLINDS ME  
 OR SOMETHING THAT SOME BODY SAID, <sup>because they</sup> ~~thought~~  
 THOUGHT WE FIT TOGETHER WALKING  
 ITS JUST KNOWING THAT THE WORLD WILL NOT BE  
 CURSING OR ~~FORGETTING~~ <sup>FORGIVING</sup> IF I WALK ALONG  
 THIS RAILROAD TRACK AND FIND  
 THAT YOU'RE <sup>MOVING</sup> ~~SLEEPING~~ <sup>ON</sup> ~~THE~~ THE BACKROADS  
 BY THE RIVERS OF MY MEMORY, EVER SMILING  
 EVER GENTLE ON MY MIND



## SONGWRITER MANUSCRIPT

## "The Real Me" (excerpt) • Lesson 9

Rosanne Cash

## The Real Me

I don't know what ~~you~~<sup>I</sup> feel no more  
 When ~~you~~ look in ~~my~~<sup>your</sup> eyes  
 I know I'm the same girl who walked  
 out that door

But I'm ~~brave~~<sup>brave</sup> new inside  
~~maybe what I'm saying isn't true at all~~  
~~And I don't know what I think about this~~  
~~I take it a minute at a time~~  
~~But I'd give up it up to hold you right now~~  
~~maybe all I want is to hold you right now~~  
 No compromise

this is the real me  
 Breaking down at last  
 this is the real me  
 Crawling out of ~~from~~<sup>my</sup> past  
 Baby the real me  
 Wants the real you so bad

A numbness overcomes me now  
 like alcohol and fear  
 I want to crawl inside you  
 But I don't want you near  
 A woman's not a mystery  
 Not a shadow of a man.

I'm Not a queen inside a mirror no more  
 Not a nurse to hold your hand

~~I've got no answers now~~  
~~Only one thing I know is true~~



## SONGWRITER MANUSCRIPT

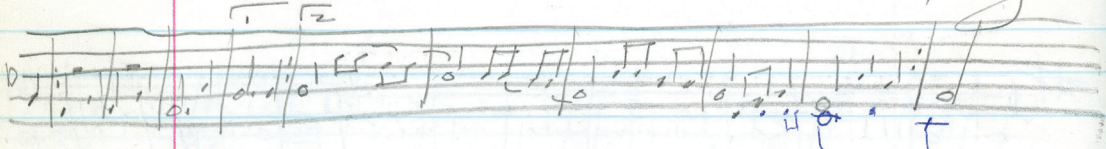
**"Love Hurts" (excerpt) • Lesson 9**

Boudleaux Bryant • Recorded by Emmylou Harris and Gram Parsons, and The Everly Brothers

98

Love Hurts

Boudleaux Bryant



Love hurts love scars  
 " <sup>wounds</sup> ~~pains~~ and mars  
 any heart not tough  
 nor strong enough  
 to take a lot of pain  
 " " " " "

love is like a cloud  
 holds a lot of rain love hurts

I'm young I know  
 But even so  
 I know ~~the score~~ a thing or two  
 I've learned from you  
 To take a lot of pain  
 " " " " "

~~love is like~~  
 I've really learned a lot  
 " " " "

love is like a flame stove  
 burns you when it's hot love hurts

First Record

Ray Charles 1962 or 3

1965

Wilson

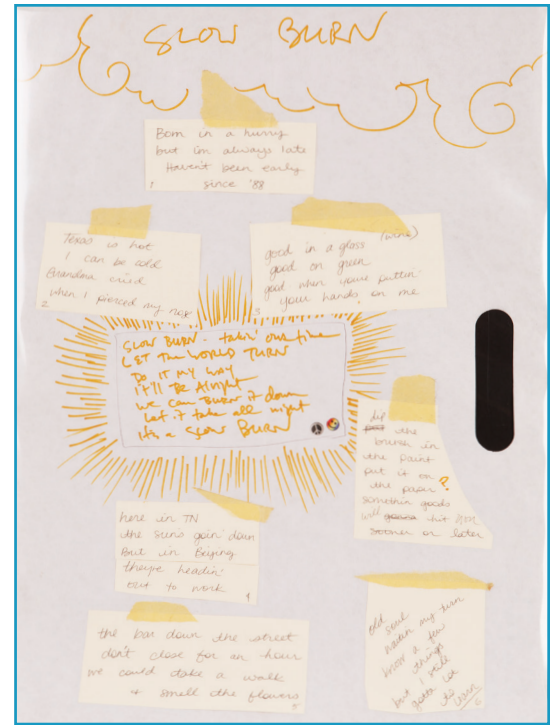
## Songwriter Quotes Sources • Lesson 1

1. Neil Young: Interview with Jonathan Demme at 2012 Slamdance Film Festival ([youtu.be/YLBwoU4KhBE](https://youtu.be/YLBwoU4KhBE))
2. Ed Sheeran: ABC News ([abcnews.go.com](http://abcnews.go.com)), posted August 29, 2018.
3. Brian Wilson: *Singer* magazine, 2002
4. John Mayer: World Cafe, NPR, aired May 25, 2012
5. John Legend: *American Songwriter*, November/December 2005
6. Janis Ian: *Songwriters on Songwriting* by Paul Zollo, 2003
7. Loretta Lynn: *American Songwriter*, January/February 2011



*Loretta Lynn was the first woman named Entertainer of the Year by the Country Music Association. Her numerous accolades include Kennedy Center Honors, the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She is a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, and Songwriters Hall of Fame (New York).*





Top right: Kacey Musgraves's manuscript for "Slow Burn"

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to the following educators, songwriters, and contributors who offered time and input during the development of this resource:

Shane Adams, Songwriting consultant  
Nancy Kruh, Writer and editor  
Craig Shelburne, Writer and digital portal support  
Ariadne Zitsos, Writer

---

### SONGWRITER AND TEACHER ADVISORS

Ronda Armstrong, Stanford Elementary Montessori Design Center	Kathy Hussey
Laura Benton, Cockrill Elementary School	Jason Jordan, Woodland Middle School
Misty Rae Carson	Barclay Randall, McGavock High School
Ashley Copeland, Watertown Elementary School	Freya Sachs, University School of Nashville
Margaret Deiters, Cane Ridge High School	Nita Smith, Isaiah T. Creswell Middle Prep School of the Arts
Aaron Helvig	Lacey Williams
Kathy Hull, Hull-Jackson Elementary Montessori Magnet	Claire Wyndham

---

Made possible by the Country Music Association Endowment for Words & Music

### Words & Music Funders



METRO ARTS  
NASHVILLE OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT for the ARTS  
arts.gov

Words & Music is made possible by the Country Music Association Endowment for Words & Music and is funded in part by Chet Atkins Music Education Fund of The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee; CMA; CMA Foundation; Dollar General Literacy Foundation; HCA Foundation; The Memorial Foundation; Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission; Nashville Predators Foundation; PNC Grow Up Great; Tennessee Arts Commission; and Wells Fargo.





**222 REP. JOHN LEWIS WAY SOUTH • NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37203**

**615.416.2001 • [CountryMusicHallofFame.org](http://CountryMusicHallofFame.org) • [Schools@CountryMusicHallofFame.org](mailto:Schools@CountryMusicHallofFame.org)  
Visit [CountryMusicHallofFame.org/WordsAndMusic](http://CountryMusicHallofFame.org/WordsAndMusic) for Supporting Digital Resources.**