



## FEATURE

# AMERICAN FOLK: THE MUSIC OF THE WORKING CLASS

*Meets National Core Arts Anchor Standards 5, 7, 9 and 10*

### OBJECTIVES

- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation (Pr5)
- Perceive and analyze artistic work (Re7)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work (Re9)
- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art (Co10)

### MATERIALS

- Music Alive! magazines (Vol.39 No.4)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access

### START

- Ask your students to read “American Folk: The Music Of The Working Class” on pages 6-9 before reviewing the words below. [This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.]

**EMERGENCE**—the process of becoming important or prominent

**SPIRITUAL**—a religious song associated with black Christians of the southern US

**OPPRESSION**—prolonged cruel or unjust treatment

**CONVICTION**—a firmly held belief or opinion

**SENTIMENT**—a view or attitude toward a situation or event; an opinion

**REVIVAL**—an instance of something becoming popular again

**INJUSTICE**—lack of fairness or justice

**DOMINATE**—having a commanding influence on

**DERAIL**—obstruct a process by diverting it from its intended course

**ESSENCE**—the natural quality of something

**PIONEER**—a person who is among the first to research and develop a new area of activity

**AMEND**—make minor changes to

**RENDITION**—a performance or interpretation of a piece of music

**FRACTIOUS**—irritable and difficult to control

**RESILIENCE**—the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties

**DOWNTRODDEN**—treated badly by people in power

### DEVELOP

#### Ask students the following questions:

From what other words did “folk” originate?

What does folk music represent?

Why is it important?

How has it changed over the years?

What are some of the sub-genres that make up what we know as folk music?

What kinds of things did the original folk musicians sing about?

During what decade did the American folk music revival occur?

Who was the first person to introduce the electric guitar to folk music?

Who are some contemporary folk musicians?

In your opinion, does folk music have a place in the music industry today?

Discuss the ways in which we are influenced by music, regardless of genre. What are some songs that make you think or feel something special? Why do they make you feel that way?

What differentiates one genre from another? How do you feel about crossover music?

Should genres remain close to their roots and committed to their original purpose, or is welcoming change more important? In what ways is Beyoncé a folk artist, from the perspective of someone like Nora Guthrie?

### CLOSE

Play each song in the Hear the Music playlist: “This Land Is Your Land,” “Sweet Baby James” and “I Will Wait.” Compare and contrast the style, instrumentation and overall message. Do they all sound like folk music to you?

### ASSESS

Did the students read the article?

Did they answer the review questions?