



FEATURE

A SONG IS BORN: FROM INSPIRATION TO RADIO

Meets National Core Arts Anchor Standards 7-9, 11

OBJECTIVES

- Perceive and analyze artistic work. (Re7)
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. (Re8)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. (Re9)
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding. (Cn11)

MATERIALS

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

START

Ask your students to read “A Song Is Born” on pages 10-13. Then, go over the following highlighted words. [This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.]

NETWORK—interact with other people to exchange information and develop contacts, especially to further one’s career

FORMULAIC—constituting or containing a verbal formula or set form of words

VULNERABLE—susceptible to physical or emotional attack or harm

ARRANGEMENT—a composition adapted for performance with different instruments or voices

ORCHESTRATION—the assignment of instruments to a particular composition

EXECUTE—carry out or put into effect

CONSOLE—a plane or unit accommodating a set of control for electronic equipment

TONAL—of or relating to the pitch, quality and strength of music

DISTRIBUTION—the action of sharing something out among a number of recipients

KINKS—flaws or obstacles in a plan, operation

AGGREGATOR—a wholesale buyer or broker of a utility service

DEVELOP

Review concepts from the article by asking the following questions:

What is the first step in getting a song onto the radio or streaming platforms?

What are some techniques to try when writing a song?

What is the difference between arrangement and orchestration?

Give an example of two different ways you could orchestrate a song.

What are a few of the tools you need to record a song?

What is mixing?

What is the difference between mixing and mastering?

Where should your music go once you’re done mastering it?

2. Get the class started on the first step of this process.

Let’s write a song!

- Assemble students in pairs or groups and assign each group an emotion (ex. sad, happy, excited, confused, frustrated, surprised, scared)
- Remember a time when you felt this emotion. Then write down any words associated with that memory. Using these words, construct a poem that tells a story about one specific memory or a combination of many.
- Each member of the group reads the poem aloud, each time with a new rhythm.
- The group selects the best rhythm and add a few high and low notes.
- Share your song with the class!

CLOSE

Have each group choose their favorite song. Using computers or tablets, research how any part of that song was written, how the artist (or producer, sound engineer) finds inspiration, or some bit of information on how their song came to be. Results can come from YouTube, blogs, interviews, etc.

Examples:

Article: Taylor Swift on her songwriting process tiny.cc/matg1

Video: Selena Gomez on the development of her new album tiny.cc/matg2

ASSESS

Did the students read the article?

Did they review the vocabulary words?

Did they answer the supplemental questions?

Did they participate in writing a song?