



LISTENING GUIDE

“GRACELAND” BY PAUL SIMON

Meets National Core Arts Standards 5, 7, 9, and 11

OBJECTIVES

- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation (*Pr5*)
- Perceive and analyze artistic work (*Re7*)
- 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.40 No.1)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access

START

Ask your students to read “Listening Guide” on pages 18-19.

DEVELOP

► Play “Tiny Dancer” by Elton John (*Hear the Music track 2 on musicalive.com*) while having the students follow along with the timeline.

2. Ask students about the song

What instruments do you hear in the intro?

Is the tempo fast or slow?

What genre is the song? How do you know?

What is this song about?

What adjectives would you use to describe this song?

What is unique about John’s voice?

At what points in the song are there changes in instrumentation?

How does this song make you feel?

Do you like the song? Why or why not?

3. Ask students about the story behind the song

Who co-wrote “Tiny Dancer” with Elton John?

What was the songwriting duo’s first impression of LA?

Who is “Tiny Dancer” about?

What were Elton John and Bernie Taupin inspired by?

CLOSE

As a class, discuss what might inspire you to write a song.

“Tiny Dancer” is commonly thought to be about one particular woman and the things John observes her doing, however, there is so much more context to be discovered by listening closely. Knowing that the song is about an entire population, how does your interpretation change? What subject would you write a song about (if you had to), and why? In what context?

ASSESS

Did the students follow along with the Listening Guide?

Did they listen to the song using the timeline?

Did they answer the supplemental questions?

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