

*Illustrative Learning/Assessment Activity K (Grades 5-8)*

- Content Standard 4:** Students will compose and arrange music.
- Performance Standard:** a. compose short pieces within specified guidelines, demonstrating how the elements of music are used to achieve unity and variety, tension and release, and balance
- Content Standard 5:** Students will read and notate music.
- Performance Standard:** d. use standard notation to record their musical ideas and the musical ideas of others
- Content Standard 7:** Students will evaluate music and music performances.
- Performance Standard:** b. evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their own and others' performances, compositions, arrangements and improvisations by applying specific criteria appropriate for the style of the music, and offer constructive suggestions for improvement

**Learning Activity.** The ensemble teacher instructs the students to compose a short (12-measure) ABA melody for their own voice or instrument, or for a MIDI keyboard. Students are instructed to use appropriate notational symbols (clef sign, key signature, note pitches and values, meter signature, etc.); to include at least one dynamic change; and to provide contrast between the A and B sections. Students write brief descriptions of the way they used the elements of music to create contrast between the A and B sections. Students are encouraged to use computers to notate their compositions.

Students either perform, or arrange for classmates to perform, their melodies. The teacher may choose to have the students record their melodies and/or perform them in class. Students and the teacher evaluate the melodies based on whether they used the correct number of measures, ABA form, dynamic change and accurate notation; whether they created a contrasting B section; whether they accurately described the contrast between their A and B sections, using appropriate musical vocabulary; and the extent to which their notation matches the performance.

*Illustrative Learning/Assessment Activity L (Grades 5-8)*

- Content Standard 4:** Students will compose and arrange music.
- Performance Standard:** a. compose short pieces within specified guidelines, demonstrating how the elements of music are used to achieve unity and variety, tension and release, and balance
- Content Standard 5:** Students will read and notate music.
- Performance Standard:** d. use standard notation to record their musical ideas and the musical ideas of others
- Content Standard 6:** Students will listen to, describe and analyze music.
- Performance Standards:**
- a. describe specific music events in a given aural example, using appropriate terminology
  - b. analyze the uses of elements of music in aural examples representing diverse genres and cultures
  - c. demonstrate knowledge of the basic principles of meter, rhythm, tonality, intervals, chords and harmonic progressions in their analyses of music
- Content Standard 7:** Students will evaluate music and music performances.
- Performance Standard:** b. evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their own and others' performances, compositions, arrangements and improvisations by applying specific criteria appropriate for the style of the music, and offer constructive suggestions for improvement

**Learning Activity for Standard 4a.** Students are asked to create, by ear, a melody within the following guidelines. The melody:

- should be at least eight measures long;
- uses repetition (sequence) to create unity;
- range should be no more than an octave and should use notes contained in only one of the three following scales: C Major, F Major or G Major;
- is mostly stepwise, with skips added for variety;
- uses notes of only three rhythmic values: quarter, eighth and half;
- may contain rests; and
- ends on a resting tone.

**Learning Activity for Standard 5d.** Students are instructed to notate their melody and are told that their work will be assessed on the following dimensions:

- the degree to which the notated pitches and rhythms match the created melody; and
- accurate drawing of notational symbols.

**Learning Activity for Standards 6 and 7.** Students are asked to evaluate the strengths and areas they would like to improve in their compositions, recording their comments in their music journals and using music terminology whenever possible. Their evaluations are assessed on the following:

- accurate identification of strengths and areas needing improvement in their compositions (7b);
- providing appropriate suggestions for improving their compositions (7b); and
- identification of musical events in the composition (6b.), referring to the elements of music and using music terminology (6c).

*Illustrative Learning/Assessment Activity M (At Four Grade Levels)*

**Content Standard 6:** Students will listen to, describe and analyze music.

**Content Standard 9:** Students will understand music in relation to history and culture.

**Learning Activity.** Students select a live or recorded performance of a piece of music and identify the form, instrumentation, period, culture or other elements of that piece. They speculate about the function of the music within the culture (e.g., programmatic, dance, religious), supporting their ideas with descriptions and comparisons to other pieces from past experience. Students compare technical and expressive qualities of the music and/or its performance to other works/performances. Students support their conclusions, using appropriate musical vocabulary.

This task is interpreted for four grade clusters as follows:

**CONTENT AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS ADDRESSED**

Grades K-4	Grades 5-8	Grades 9-12 Proficient	Grades 9-12 Advanced
6: a, b and c 9: a, b, c and d	6: all 9: a and b	6: a 9: a and c	

**GRADE-LEVEL VARIATIONS ON TASKS**

Students select a song from the Bessie Smith book, *Step It Down*. They analyze the call and response form and place it in the context of African songs and early African-American spirituals and folk songs. They discuss the function in terms of religion and entertainment. They use body percussion and unpitched percussion instruments, and apply the "step-it-down" movement. They discuss differences in performance style from other folk songs with which they are familiar.

Students select an orchestral minuet. They analyze the ABA form, note the difference in instrumentation between the B section (trio) and the A section (tutti) and discuss the function of the minuet as a dance as well as a movement of an orchestral work. They will discuss rhythmic characteristics and tempo as elements of interpretation in relation to the dance function. Students will experience the minuet form through dance and instrument performance activities. They will compare their selected piece with other minuets to determine the extent to which the form has been consistent with the dance function or has evolved to a more abstract, concert function.

Students will select a recording of a piece for the Japanese *shakuhachi* (bamboo flute) such as *The Tenderness of Cranes*. They will identify the form according to changes in register, tempo, rhythm, melodic structure and repetition of material, and will note such performance techniques as flutter-tongue and the bending of tones. They will trace the evolution of the style from that of the wandering Buddhist monks to the contemporary classical setting. They will discuss the programmatic characteristics of the music that, for example, represent the manner in which the adult birds care for their young. They will compare the expressive qualities of music for the *shakuhachi* with that of programmatic and absolute music for the Western flute.

In the course of a unit on the music of Mexico, students will listen to a village performance of music from the Yaqui Deer Dance. They will view the Yaqui Deer Dance on the video of the Ballet Folklorica de Mexico. Finally, they will listen to *El Venado y Luis Sandi*, a suite for symphony orchestra composed with themes from the Yaqui Deer Dance. The students will identify the form of each recording in terms of degree of repetition and contrast, number of themes, etc. They will compare the instrumentation between performances. They will discuss the meaning of the Deer Dance in the culture and compare the performance styles between the village ensemble, the professional dance ensemble and the symphony orchestra. They will assess such aspects as the tone quality of the instruments in relation to the appropriateness for each setting.

*Illustrative Learning/Assessment Activity N (Grades 9-12)*

**Content Standard 8:** Students will make connections between music, other disciplines and daily life.

**Performance Standards:**

- a. explain how elements, artistic processes and organizational principles are used in similar and distinctive ways in the various arts and cite examples
- b. explain ways in which the principles and subject matter of various disciplines outside the arts are interrelated with those of music

**Learning Activity.** As a midterm project for a performing group, students produce, direct and perform in an arts showcase during their scheduled exam period. Students are instructed to include vocal and instrumental music, dance, drama and visual artwork (either displayed at the performance site or involving the graphic layout and printing of the program).

Every student accepts responsibility for a role in the production, such as performer, conductor, director, producer (publicity, programs, rehearsal scheduling) or technician (lights, sound, props, runners, house). Students are instructed to work within their roles toward unity, variety and appropriateness in selecting, designing and performing the program. They are instructed to maintain a reflective journal documenting their contributions, including problems they encountered, how they solved them and how they might change their decisions if they had a second opportunity. In their decision making they are asked to focus across art forms on elements contributing to unity and variety in the production.

Students present their final product during the scheduled exam time. By the next class session, students are instructed to summarize in writing their individual involvement in the process, the artistic and organizational skills involved in the production and the technical problems that were solved. They are also instructed to describe the elements that contributed to unity and variety in the final production for each art form (dance, music, theatre and the visual arts).

## Glossary For Music Standards

**Note:** asterisk (\*) indicates other definitions found in this glossary.

**Alla breve.** The \*meter signature C (with a vertical slash through the C) indicating the equivalent of 2/2 time.

**Articulation.** In performance, the characteristics of attack and decay of tones and the manner and extent to which tones in sequence are connected or disconnected, such as legato, staccato and marcato.

**Classroom instruments.** Instruments typically used in the general music classroom, including, for example, recorder-type instruments, chorded zithers, mallet instruments, simple percussion instruments, \*fretted instruments, keyboard instruments and electronic instruments.

**Diction.** The \*articulation or pronunciation of words when singing, including both vowel and consonant sounds.

**Dynamic levels, dynamics.** Degrees of loudness.

**Elements of music.** Pitch, \*rhythm, \*harmony, \*dynamics, \*timbre, \*texture, \*form.

**Expression, expressive, expressively.** With appropriate \*dynamics, phrasing, \*style and interpretation, and appropriate variations in dynamics and tempo.

**Form.** The overall structural organization of a music composition (e.g., AB, ABA, call and response, rondo, theme and variations, sonata-allegro) and the interrelationships of music events within the overall structure.

**Fretted instruments.** Instruments with frets (strips of material across the fingerboard allowing the strings to be stopped at predetermined locations), such as guitar, ukulele, mountain dulcimer and sitar.

**Genre.** A type or category of music, e.g., sonata, opera, oratorio, art song, gospel, suite, jazz, madrigal, march, work song, lullaby, barbershop, Dixieland.

**Harmony.** The chordal or vertical combination of pitches.

**Intonation.** The degree to which pitch is accurately produced in performance, such as among the players in an ensemble.

**Level of difficulty.** For purposes of these standards, music is classified into six levels of difficulty:

- Level 1 – Very easy. Easy keys, \*meters and rhythms; limited ranges.
- Level 2 – Easy. May include changes of tempo, key and meter; modest ranges.
- Level 3 – Moderately easy. Contains moderate technical demands, expanded ranges and varied interpretive requirements.
- Level 4 – Moderately difficult. Requires well-developed \*technical skills, attention to phrasing and interpretation, and ability to perform various meters and rhythms in a variety of keys.
- Level 5 – Difficult. Requires advanced technical and interpretive skills; contains key signatures with numerous sharps or flats, unusual meters, complex rhythms, subtle \*dynamic requirements.
- Level 6 – Very difficult. Suitable for musically mature students of exceptional competence.

(Adapted with permission from NYSSMA Manual, Edition XXIII, published by the New York State School Music Association, 1991.)

**Meter.** The grouping in which a succession of rhythmic pulses or beats is organized; indicated by a \*meter signature at the beginning of a musical work or section.

**Meter signature.** An indicator of the \*meter of a musical work, usually presented in the form of a fraction, the denominator of which indicates the unit of measurement and the numerator of which indicates the number of units that make up a measure.

**MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface).** Standard specifications that enable electronic instruments, such as the synthesizer, sampler, sequencer and drum machine from any manufacturer to communicate with one another and with computers.

**Ostinato.** A short musical pattern (rhythm, melodic phrase or bass line) that is repeated consistently throughout a composition.

**Rhythm.** The durations in time of a series of musical notes.

**Staves.** Plural of staff. The five parallel lines on which music is written.

**Style.** The distinctive or characteristic manner in which the \*elements of music are treated. In practice, the term may be applied to, for example, composers (the style of Copland), periods (Baroque style), media (keyboard style), nations (French style), \*forms or types of composition (fugal style, contrapuntal style) or \*genres (operatic style, bluegrass style).

**Technical accuracy, technical skills.** The ability to perform with appropriate \*timbre, \*intonation and \*diction/\*articulation and correct pitches and \*rhythms.

**Texture.** The manner in which musical lines or notes are interwoven in a section or work.

**Timbre.** The character or quality of a sound that distinguishes one sound source (such as instrument or voice) from another.

**Tonality.** The harmonic relationship of tones with respect to a definite center or point of rest; fundamental to much of Western music from ca. 1600.

