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INTRODUCTION: Overview and Rationale

- In this workshop we will learn how to create original verses to pre-existing songs. We will move from simple one-line verses to somewhat more complicated folk-style and blues songs.
- Music is a natural and pleasurable art form for students. Most of our lives are immersed in music from the radio, the Internet, recordings, and in almost every environment we move through.
- Studies have shown how music improves brain function and literacy skills.
- Arts integration provides the opportunity to link curricular objectives or school concerns with an art form. Lyric writing can create mutually reinforcing connections with school subjects or issues, allowing students to create original verses as they express and process their understanding.
- Group lyric writing directly incorporates 21st century skills. Students create verses, they collaborate in the process, they communicate their understanding or message, and they use critical thinking to assess their work as they engage with curricular content.

Music Standards Addressed in this Workshop

Virginia

4.1 The student will sing a repertoire of songs in tune and with expression.

4.14 The student will exhibit respect for the contributions of self and others in a music setting.

1. Contribute to a group effort of making music.
2. Contribute to a group effort of listening to music.
3. Participate in music activities that involve sharing, taking turns, and other ways of demonstrating good citizenship.

Teacher and Student Objectives

Teacher Objectives

Teachers will be able to lead students in writing lyrics to verses to three songs.

Teachers will be able to identify key elements of lyric writing.

Teachers will appreciate connections between lyric writing and demonstrating understanding of other academic areas.

Teachers will know where to find further resources on lyric writing.

Student Objectives

Students will know the key elements of lyric writing.

Students will be able to create original verse lyrics that demonstrate their understanding of other subject areas.

Students will work collaboratively to write lyrics.

Students will exercise key components of creativity, including brainstorming and selecting ideas, synthesizing understanding, and using critical thinking, to edit their work.

Students will be able to sing their verses with appropriate volume and clarity.

The Kennedy Center's Definition of Arts Integration

**Arts Integration is
an APPROACH to TEACHING
in which students
construct and demonstrate
UNDERSTANDING
through an
ART FORM.**

**Students engage in a
CREATIVE PROCESS
which CONNECTS
an art form and another subject
area and meets
EVOLVING OBJECTIVES
in both.**

PREPARING TO SING: Vocal Warm-Ups

In this activity, students will warm up their voices and sing a song together.

Background Information

Singing creates community in classrooms. It creates safety. It allows students to relax into an activity and to get past self-consciousness, preparing them for creating lyrics together. There's also little risk of failure with these initial activities. Teachers can build a sense of confidence, success, and group cohesion.

Before engaging in lyric writing, lead students in warm-up vocal activities. Warming up with students emphasizes physical aspects of singing and helps them to relax and get comfortable vocally in a non-threatening and fun way. There are several examples of exercises listed here, but you may have others that you know and like. The order that I approach these warm-ups moves from simply making sound to adding pitch to copying pitch. We also work on breathing technique, articulation, and group cohesion. Spending three to five minutes warming up is a good investment of time.

Follow your warm-ups with a song. This song could be a song you will write new lyrics to, or you may choose another song that students will enjoy and for which there is no particular objective. Again, this small investment of time creates an environment where the following activities are more likely to be successful. Today, we will use "So Many Ways to Be Smart" as a warm-up song. Lyrics and chords are found on page 9.

Process

1. Lead students in several vocal warm-ups that prepare their mouths and vocal apparatus for singing. These warm-ups are designed to help students open their mouths when singing, explore different sounds, connect to their breathing, and articulate consonants.
 - **Nutcracker:** Have students drop their jaws like a Christmas nutcracker.
 - **Snake:** Have students make a hissing sound to activate breath.
 - **Bee:** Have students make a buzzing sound, moving the sound around their mouth.
 - **Hum:** Have students hum with rising and falling pitch.
 - **Throw the ball:** Throw a soft object from person to person and have students follow the trajectory with pitch.
 - **Alien:** Make a sound with varying pitch, and illustrate the pitch change with up and down motions of your finger. Have students echo and repeat the sound and motion.
 - **Letters:** Make the sound of a letter while drawing the letter. Have students repeat sound and motion.
 - **Cat and Dog:** Have students generate different pitches and sounds in sequence by using the following process. Create a story using your hands like puppets with dog and cat sounds. Have students echo each of your sounds and motions. Have the dog and cat alternate for several interactions and finally have either the dog or the cat run away at the end.
2. Sing a song with students that they will enjoy. “So Many Ways To Be Smart” (page 9) is one we will sing today.
3. For further vocal warm-up resources:
<http://www.musickit.com/resources/vocal.html>
<http://www.your-personal-singing-guide.com/vocal-warmup.html>

Preparing to Sing: Vocal Warm-ups

Nutcracker



Hum



Alien



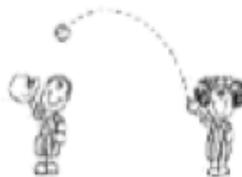
Snake



Letter shapes



Throw the ball



Bee



Cat and Dog



Process

1. **Define Lyric:** Define what a lyric is (the words to a song). Give a few examples from different songs (e.g., “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” “This Land is Your Land,” “Jingle Bells”).
2. **Identify Genres:** Have students identify the kinds of music (genres) they listen to. Make a list. Answers will probably include country, rap, heavy metal, and pop. Be careful that students do not disrespect each other’s answers. Note that many styles or genres have lyrics; lyric writing is a widespread art form.
3. **Identify the Difference Between Chorus and Verse:** Most songs have a chorus and a verse. The chorus is the part of the song that is repeated, while verses are usually only sung once. Choruses also give the overview of the song’s subject, and verses fill in details. Choruses usually contain the song’s title, too.
4. **Discuss That Lyrics Have Meaning:** Have students identify lyrics from a song that they like. Ask students to discuss why they like those lyrics--what makes them memorable? Answers might include: funny, effective rhymes, an original way of saying things, and memorable word play. Discover how the lyrics have personal meaning to them.
5. **Discuss the Elements of Lyrics:** Identify the elements of lyrics: rhythm, meaning, and rhyme. Refer to the chart from 35 as appropriate.
6. **Analyze the Song.** Notice how each of the above elements is manifested in the song you have sung with students. The following questions can guide your analysis of the song, “So Many Ways to Be Smart.”
 - What is the song about? Multiple intelligences, learning styles
 - What is the emotion of the song? Cheerful, humorous, upbeat
 - How many lines are in the chorus? Four
 - How many lines are in the verse? Four
 - Is there a rhyme pattern? Yes, AABB
 - How many syllables are in each line? Eight to Nine

Lyrics in Our Lives: Examining Background Knowledge and Emotional Connections to Songs

In this learning activity, students will consider and discuss how lyrics are text with personal meaning.

Background Information

Lyrics are the words to songs. They share elements with poetry, but are not necessarily poems on their own. Lyrics connect with music, and their rhythm and overall structure have to fit with melody and rhythm. Lyrics to songs vary with style, emotion, and genre. Some song lyrics are very short; others go on for many verses. Some lyrics repeat throughout a song, while others are heard only once.

Originally we can suppose that most music was folk music: improvised, passed down orally, and without any one author. With the advent of writing, printing, and musical notation, individual authors of songs could be identified with their work. Now almost all new songs come directly from specific writers. Whether a writer is working with show tunes, rap, pop music, or classical styles, attention to the words has similar elements, which we will explore in this workshop.

Song lyrics have meaning. They convey a message, information, or a story. For some listeners lyrics are very important in their appreciation of a song, while for others different elements are more important. Some studies have shown that girls pay more attention to lyrics and their meaning than boys, who are more affected by the beat, arrangement, and timbre of a song.

Teacher Reflections: Vocal Warm-Ups and Lyrics in Our Lives

1. Why is it important for students to warm up vocally before singing?
2. What is the value of connecting to the music students listen to?

“Words make you think a thought. Music makes you feel a feeling. A song makes you feel a thought.”

E.Yip Harburg (lyricist for “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” and “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?”)

WRITING LYRICS

Creating Single Line Lyrics: “I’m On My Way”

In this learning activity, students will be introduced to writing lyrics. They will create new lyrics for an existing song, “I’m On My Way,” which is a call and response song.

These lyrics are one line long and do not rhyme. In this activity, we focus on elements of rhythm and meaning. Rhythm is of particular importance in this lesson. Students may require help to create lines that fit the metrical pattern.

“I’m On My Way” Lyrics

I’m on my way... (I’m on my way)
Down to Canaan Land... (Down to Canaan Land)
I’m on my way... (I’m on my way)
Down to Canaan Land... (Down to Canaan Land)
I’m on my way... (I’m on my way)
Down to Canaan Land... (Down to Canaan Land)
I’m on my way, glory hallelujah, I’m on my way.

Other verses might include:

If you won’t go... (If you won’t go)
Don’t you hinder me... (Don’t you hinder me)
If you won’t go... (If you won’t go)
Don’t you hinder me... (Don’t you hinder me)
If you won’t go... (If you won’t go)
Don’t you hinder me.. (Don’t you hinder me)
I’m on my way, glory hallelujah, I’m on my way.

Other verse lyrics in this song include:

Hand in hand... (hand in hand)
Side by side... (side by side)
Etc.

To listen to Bill Harley sing this song, go to the following link:
<http://www.songsforteaching.com/billharley/imonmyway.ht>

Process

1) Introduce Lesson

- Explain to students that we will be listening to a song and writing new lyrics (or words) to the song.

2) Play the Song for Students

3) Teach Students about the Background (or Genre) of the Song.

“I’m On My Way” is an old Southern spiritual song that was adapted for singing during the Civil Rights Movement. It features a call and response pattern (an echo), and you can sing it with instruments or *a cappella* (unaccompanied.)

4) Teach the song to students.

- Listen to the Song:** Typically when teaching a song, you should first let students listen to at least two verses, so they can get an intuitive sense of the pattern.
- Call and Response:** Sing one verse in which students join in by echoing each line back to you, and then singing the final line in unison with you. You may also begin by having students sing the melody using “la, la, la’s” or nonsense words to fit the metrical space, so they understand the rhythm of the words.
- Repeat with More Volume:** Once students have sung a verse with you, sing it again, this time encouraging more volume and energy.
- Correct Trouble spots:** Listen to hear if students need help singing any part of the song, paying attention to words and pitch. Students may need to sing or repeat some part of the song, one line perhaps, if they need help getting it right.
- Repeat:** Sing the entire song again with students.

5) Analyze the Song

Have students analyze the structure of verses.

- What is the song about?
It’s about a journey, about leaving, possibly about freedom or escape from slavery. Moving forward against obstacles is a more general way to state this theme.
- What is the emotion of the song?
Determination, Resolve, Hope
- What is the number of lines in the chorus?
There is no chorus, because the song only has one part (a verse).
- What is the number of lines in the verse?
There are four total lines. The first three are the same. (They repeat.) The last line (“I’m on my way, Glory Hallelujah, ...”) is the same in all verses, a repeating line, but not a chorus.
- What is the rhyme pattern?

There is no rhyme.

- What is the rhythmic structure?

Identify the length of a line by counting syllables. In this song, the length of the line is about eight-nine syllables, in two sets of four-five (I'm on my way [echo]...Down to Canaan Land [echo]). It may be helpful to clap the syllables from a line to make this idea clear.

Beat in music is the basic unit of measurement, the steady pulse of the piece. Rhythm is what happens within or above the beat and is not necessarily regular. Illustrate these two concepts by counting a beat with your hand and adding a rhythm over the top of it with your voice. In songwriting, we are not concerned with beat as much as we are with rhythm.

6) Whole Group Modeling/Writing

Brainstorm, as a large group, possible lines (phrases) that could relate to the meaning of the song—a journey of overcoming obstacles/problems—and could be the new lyrics. Assess each idea with students for appropriate meaning as well as metrical fit. Sing a few of the new lyric lines with students. Are we going to keep the last line the same as in the original or is that going to be different? You can decide this with student input.

7) Create New Lines.

Have students generate lines individually and then share them with a partner.

Remind students that the lines need to be the right length (four syllables in each of the two phrases for a total of eight syllables) and need to relate in some way to the topic/title of the song.

Ask some students to share lines with the large group. Discuss each line to see if it includes a rhythm that fits the number of syllables and focuses on the meaning that in some way relates to the idea of being on your way and overcoming obstacles. If possible, revise lines as necessary so that students understand that a lyricist revises their work. Lines do not necessarily need to be about slavery or freedom.

8) Perform/Share

As a large group sing some successfully generated student lines in the song.

9) Lesson Closure and Reflection

- Review the purpose of the lesson.
- Reflect with students on the process of generating ideas for lyrics and shaping them to fit the rhythm. Ask them:
 - How did you generate ideas for the lyrics?
 - Was that process easy or hard? Why?
 - How did you shape the lyrics to fit the rhythm of the music?
 - What did you learn about writing lyrics?

Teacher Reflections

1. Why is this a good song to start with when you are teaching students how to write lyrics?
2. How does this process connect to other writing activities in your classroom?

"Music and rhythm find their way into the secret places of the soul." — Plato

Process

1) Introduce Lesson

In this learning activity, students will work with an existing melody to create new lyrics to a song verse. These lyrics will demonstrate their understanding of a particular content area. For our sample lesson, we will work with meteorology.

2) Play the Song for Students

3) Teach Students about the Background (or Genre) of the Song

Stuart Stotts and Tom Pease wrote the song used for this activity and students wrote the verses. It's in a folk style, with perhaps a bit of Caribbean influence. It is an effective song to teach students about writing verses because it allows for a wide range of topics and is very straightforward structurally. It's also fun to sing.

4) Teach the Song to Students

- a. **Have Students Listen to Chorus:** Play/sing the chorus of "How Do I Know?" twice for students. Ask students if they have any questions about the words.
- b. **Sing Chorus:** Have students sing the chorus with you.
- c. **Repeat Chorus with More Volume:** Once students have learned the chorus, sing it with them one more time, encouraging more volume from them.
- d. **Correct Trouble spots:** Listen to hear if students need help singing any part of the chorus, paying attention to words and pitch. Students may need to sing or repeat some part of the chorus, one line perhaps, if they need help getting it right.
- e. **Have Students Listen to Verse:** Play/sing a verse to the song while students listen.
- f. **Sing Verse:** Then have students sing the first verse with you.
- g. **Correct Trouble spots:** Listen to hear if students need help singing any part of the verse, paying attention to words and pitch. Students may need to sing or repeat some part of the verse, one line perhaps, if they need help getting it right.
- h. **Have Students Listen to Second Verse:** Play/sing a second verse to the song while students listen.
- i. **Sing a Second Verse:** Then have students sing the second verse with you.
- j. **Sing Whole Song:** Sing the entire song with students.

5) Analyze the Song

- What is the song about?
Things we learn from books.
- What is the emotion of the song?
Upbeat, happy
- What is the number of lines in the chorus?
Here there are four, three of which repeat.
- What is the number of lines in the verse?

- There are four.
- Is there a rhyme pattern?
AABB. Two couplets. A couplet is two consecutive lines that rhyme with each other.
 - How many syllables are in each line?
There are 7-10 per line.

6) Brainstorm Content/ideas for Lyrics

In a large group, have students brainstorm what they have learned about the content they will be writing a song about. The song will demonstrate their understanding of both lyric writing and the content from the other subject area. The lyrics should demonstrate to other people what they have learned. What information is most important? What arouses their curiosity? What would they want to tell others about what they have learned? By focusing on what is most important, students are practicing the reading comprehension skill of determining importance.

7) Write An Original Verse

- a. **Review the Melody:** Have students first sing melody without the words using “la, la” or “dat-da-dat.” Then have students clap the melody so they understand the rhythm of the melody.
- b. **Brainstorm Possible First Lines:** Have students generate first lines that fit the metrical pattern. As students share their lines, write their ideas on the board or a large sheet of paper.
- c. **Select the First Line:** Once several ideas have been generated, have students choose one line to begin the song with. Write the first line on the board.
- d. **Brainstorm Possible Second Lines:** Have students generate a second line that rhymes with the first to create a couplet. A couplet is two lines of equal length that rhyme with each other. Students will share their second lines while you write them on the board. Select the second line and write it below the first line.
- e. **Repeat for Third and Fourth Lines:** Repeat process for second couplet and combine the two couplets to create a verse. Make sure that the two couplets work well together in communicating the important information about the topic. Write the third and fourth lines on the board.
- f. **Sing the Verse:** Have students sing the completed verse.
- g. **Revise the Verse:** Have students suggest changes to revise and improve the verse. Changes may address content or lyrical elements (rhyme, rhythm, or meaning). Typically students will need to adjust their verses for better rhythmic fit. They should also check that their lyrics accurately reflect the content.

- h. **Review Songwriting Rubric:** Give students the songwriting rubric. Have them review it, and then lead a short discussion encouraging students to keep the items on the rubric in mind when they write their own verse next.

8) Small Group Writing or Individual Writing

- a. **Review the Melody:** Have students break into groups of 4-5. Ask students to sing the melody without the words and then clap the melody.
- b. **Each Group Writes a Verse:** Assign each group a different aspect of the topic and have each group write their own verse. It may be helpful to revisit the elements of a successful verse. They will follow the same pattern as the large group: brainstorming ideas, creating lines, and then developing subsequent rhyming lines.
- c. **Rehearse the Verse:** Have students rehearse their verse. Students may wish to write their verses on flip chart paper so that they can all see the lyrics.
- d. **Revise the Verse:** Have students revise their verse. Encourage them to review the rubric and use it during their revision process.

9) Perform/Share

Have each small group perform their verse for the rest of the class.

10) Student Assessment

Have students assess their verse against a rubric that addresses content and songwriting elements (see page 22). Sing the song again with a few verses.

Teacher Reflection:

Verse Writing To Demonstrate Understanding “How Do I Know? I Read It In A Book”

1. We’ve just written original verses to a song, incorporating ideas from content from other subject areas, rhyme, verse structure, and rhythm. Take a moment to review the handout and the steps we followed.

2. How can you assess students’ understanding with this activity? Look at the following examples to see verses students have created.

Samples of Students’ Work

Science—Water Cycle (3rd Grade)

Rain, snow, hail, and sleet
Evaporate in sun and heat.
Condensing into little drops.
The water cycle never stops.

Reading—Character (1st Grade)

There’s a boy whose name is Max
He ate no dinner and no snacks.
He had a dream and went afar
Off to where the wild things are.

There’s a book about some pig.
His spider friend was not so big.
She spun some words and in the end
Saved the life of her best friend.

	Diamond	Ruby	Quartz	Gravel
Songwriting Elements	Verse fits meter of lines and follows rhyme scheme. Verse uses unusual rhyme or internal rhyme.	Verse fits meter with one exception. Rhymes are appropriate.	Verse fits pattern with some exceptions. At least one rhyme set is appropriate.	Lines have no regular meter pattern. There is no rhyme.
Subject Content	Verse incorporates more than two significant and accurate facts, and demonstrates understanding of the scientific processes involved.	Verse incorporates two significant ideas from text. All facts are accurate.	Verse incorporates one significant idea from text and all facts are accurate.	Verse includes inaccurate facts, and significance is questionable.
Presentation of Song	Verse is easily heard and understood, and is sung with energy and excitement.	Verse is easily heard and understood.	Verse is whispered or sung with uncertainty.	Group looks sullen and refuses to sing.
Participation in Group	Everyone participated in the creation and presentation of the verse.	All but one person participated.	One person did all the work.	No one did any work, and group members blame each other for lack of work.

Lyric Writing to a Blues Form “War of Independence Blues”

In this learning activity, students will write original verses to a blues song to demonstrate their understanding of a subject that connects to the emotions common in a blues song. They will work as a large group and then in a small group and will perform/share their verse.

Background Information

The blues began in the murky depths of the South in the early 1900s. Although there is no one person we can name as the originator of the blues, some blues pioneers include Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, W.C. Handy, Bessie Smith, Willie Dixon, Son House, and B.B. King.

The blues combine western and African musical elements to create a uniquely American music that has influenced musicians around the world. The blues are a foundation of rock, pop, jazz, and even rap music.

“War of Independence” Lyrics

We're Washington's men, fighting King George
We're hungry and cold at Valley Forge
Threadbare coats and holes are in our shoes
That's why we've got the War of Independence Blues.

The song can be found at <http://www.stuart.stotts.com/mp3.html>

Process:

1) Introduce Lesson

Blues forms are good to work with in lyric writing because lines tend to be short and they rhythm straightforward. In this activity we will write verses to a blues song about the Revolutionary War.

2) Play Song for Students

Play the “Revolutionary War Blues” for students and have them listen for the structure of the verse: rhymes, rhythm, and repeating lines.

3) Teach Students about the Background (or Genre) of the Song

Explore the blues as a genre.

- a. Blues is a musical genre that began in the Deep South of the U.S at the end of the 19th century. Usually blues songs are thought to be about sadness or difficulty. Blues is a foundation of rock, jazz, pop, and even rap. Blues songs usually include notes that are bent or slid up and down in pitch, creating “blue notes” which add a certain expressive quality.
- b. Discuss history of the blues with students. Assess their prior knowledge. (Be sure to provide any additional history you would like to share.)
<http://www.history-of-rock.com/blues.htm> or
<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=18724> are two basic online resources
- c. Have them listen to at least two different blues songs. “Let the Good Times Roll” by B. B. King, “Bad Luck Blues” by Albert King. “Got My Mojo Working” by Muddy Waters, and “St. Louis Blues” by Bessie Smith are possible songs to play for students.
- d. Discuss what was the same and what was different about each of the songs to develop a deeper understanding of the genre. Students may notice contrasts in tempo (speed of the music), patterns of repetition, vocal style, and subject matter from song to song.

4) Teach the Song to Students

- a. **Have Students Listen to Chorus:** Play/sing a verse of “The War of Independence Blues” twice for students. Ask students if they have any questions about the words.
- b. **Sing Chorus:** Have students sing the verse with you.
- c. **Repeat Chorus with More Volume:** Once students have learned the verse, sing it with them one more time, encouraging more volume from them.
- d. **Correct Trouble spots:** Listen to hear if students need help singing any part of the chorus, paying attention to words and pitch. Students may need to sing or repeat some part of the chorus, one line perhaps, if they need help getting it right. Pay particular attention to the “blues note” in the verse at the end of the second line.
- e. **Sing Whole Song:** Sing the entire song with students.

5) Analyze the Song

- What is the song about?
The Revolutionary War
- What is the emotion of the song?
Hard times, bluesy, intense
- What is the number of lines in the chorus?
In this song, there's not really a chorus, just a repeating last line.
- What is the number of lines in the verse?
In this song, there are four lines, but the fourth line is always the same. The first two lines rhyme with each other, and the third line rhymes with "blues."
- What is the rhyme pattern? AA BB
- What is the rhythmic structure?
Each line has about 8 syllables.

6) Brainstorm Content/Ideas for Lyrics

- a. In a large group, have students brainstorm what they have learned about the content they will be writing a song about. The song will demonstrate their understanding of both lyric writing and the content from history. The lyrics should demonstrate to other people what they have learned. What information is most important? What arouses their curiosity? What would they want to tell others about what they have learned? By focusing on what is most important, students are practicing the reading comprehension skill of determining importance.
- b. Brainstorm rhymes for "blues." Below are some ideas.

Bruise	Muse	Abuse
Ooze	Ruse	Accuse
Cruise	Shoes	Amuse
Fuse	Snooze	Use
Lose	Whose	Choose
- c. In a large group, brainstorm ideas for a new verse

7) Write An Original Verse

- a. **Review the Melody:** Have students first sing melody without the words using "la, la" or "dat-da-dat." Then have students clap the melody so they understand the rhythm of the melody.
- b. **Brainstorm Possible First Lines:** Have students generate first lines that fit the metrical pattern. As students share their lines, write their ideas on the board or a large sheet of paper.
- c. **Select the First Line:** Once several ideas have been generated, have students choose one line to begin the song with. Write the first line on the board.

- d. **Brainstorm Possible Second Lines:** Have students generate a second line that rhymes with the first to create a couplet. A couplet is two lines of equal length that rhyme with each other. Students will share their second lines while you write them on the board. Select the second line and write it below the first line.
- e. **Repeat for Third and Fourth Lines:** Repeat process for second couplet and combine the two couplets to create a verse. Make sure that the two couplets work well together in communicating the important information about the topic. Write the third and fourth lines on the board.
- f. **Sing the Verse:** Have students sing the completed verse.
- g. **Revise the Verse:** Have students suggest changes to revise and improve the verse. Changes may address content or lyrical elements (rhyme, rhythm, or meaning). Typically students will need to adjust their verses for better rhythmic fit. They should also check that their lyrics accurately reflect the content.
- h. **Review Songwriting Rubric:** Give students the songwriting rubric. Have them review it, and then lead a short discussion encouraging students to keep the items on the rubric in mind when they write their own verse next.

8) Small Group Writing or Individual Writing

- a. **Review the Melody:** Have students break into groups of 4-5. Ask students to sing the melody without the words and then clap the melody.
- b. **Each Group Writes a Verse:** Assign each group a different aspect of the topic and have each group write their own verse. It may be helpful to revisit the elements of a successful verse. They will follow the same pattern as the large group: brainstorming ideas, creating lines, and then developing subsequent rhyming lines.
- c. **Rehearse the Verse:** Have students rehearse their verse. Students may wish to write their verses on flip chart paper so that they can all see the lyrics.
- d. **Revise the Verse:** Have students revise their verse. Encourage them to review the rubric and use it during their revision process.

9) Perform/Share

Have each small group perform their verse for the rest of the class.

10) Student Assessment

Have students assess their verse against a rubric that addresses content and songwriting elements (see page 28). Sing the song again with a few verses.

Songwriting Rubric
Stuart Stotts

	Diamond	Ruby	Quartz	Gravel
Songwriting Elements	Verse fits meter of lines and follows rhyme scheme. Verse uses unusual rhyme or internal rhyme.	Verse fits meter with one exception. Rhymes are appropriate.	Verse fits pattern with some exceptions. At least one rhyme set is appropriate.	Lines have no regular meter pattern. There is no rhyme.
Subject Content	Verse incorporates more than <u>two</u> significant and accurate facts.	Verse incorporates two significant ideas from text. All facts are accurate.	Verse incorporates one significant idea from text and all facts are accurate.	Verse includes inaccurate facts, and significance is questionable.
Presentation of Song	Verse is easily heard and understood, and is sung with energy and excitement.	Verse is easily heard and understood.	Verse is whispered or sung with uncertainty.	Group looks sullen and refuses to sing.
Participation in Group	Everyone participated in the creation and presentation of the verse.	All but one person participated.	One person did all the work.	No one did any work, and group members blame each other for lack of work.

Teacher Reflections: Individual Lyric Writing to a Blues Form “War of Independence Blues”

1. How can you assess students’ understanding of the subject in this activity?
2. What subjects can you imagine using this approach with?

Samples of Students’ Work (7th and 8th graders)

They’re in our homes, eating our food.
They sleep in our beds with their attitude
British soldiers don’t have any clues.
That’s why we’ve got the War of Independence Blues.

Passing the Acts. Raising the tax.
Making us pay. Those are the facts.
We don’t have a lot left we can lose.
That’s why we’ve got the War of Independence Blues.

We shoot from the trees. We shoot behind walls.
One bullet flies. One soldier falls.
We need all the bullets we can use.
That’s why we’ve got the War of Independence Blues.

“Scientists have discovered that the same areas of the brain that are involved in processing emotion are also involved in processing memory.”
Ruth Weiss (author and science writer)

Supplementary Resources: Bibliography

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Jensen, Eric. *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2005.

Levitin, Daniel. *This is Your Brain on Music*. NY: Plume/Penguin, 2007.

Page, Nick. *Music as a Way of Knowing*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 1996.

Sacks, Oliver. *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*. NY: Vintage, 2008.

Stotts, Stuart. *We Shall Overcome: A Song That Changed the World*. NY: Clarion Books, 2010.

Online Resources

www.SingingTheWords.pbworks.com is the wiki for this workshop. You can request access to the wiki at that site.

Audacity is a good free sound editor to create karaoke or sing along files. Available at <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

A **Stanford study** about how musical training improves the ability to process language

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/11/17/MNGQ9FPODP1.DTL>

Children's Music Network; Song resource

www.cmnonline.org

iTunes has millions of karaoke versions of songs available for sale.

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Four Days of Lessons In Lyric Writing

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
<p>Vocal Warm-ups</p> <p>Sing a song together.</p> <p>Students share lyrics that have meaning to them and discussing why.</p> <p>Looking at a verse and chorus of a song for lyric elements of rhyme, rhythm, meaning, and structure.</p> <p>Assign students to bring in a verse or chorus of a song they like.</p>	<p>Vocal Warm-ups</p> <p>Sing a song together.</p> <p>Have some students share lyrics they've brought in. Discuss them as text and explore their lyrical elements.</p> <p>Sing "I'm On My Way."</p> <p>Explore structure of "I'm On My Way."</p> <p>Have students generate single lines for "I'm On My Way."</p>	<p>Vocal Warm-ups</p> <p>Sing "I'm On My Way," including student-generated lines.</p> <p>Sing "How Do I Know?"</p> <p>Explore structure of "How Do I Know?"</p> <p>With the whole group, create a new verse to "How Do I Know?"</p> <p>Have students work in small groups or individually to write a new verse to "How Do I Know?"</p>	<p>Vocal Warm-ups</p> <p>Sing "How Do I Know?"</p> <p>Share rubric for "How Do I Know?"</p> <p>Assess process and product from previous day using rubric.</p> <p>Have students work in small groups to write another verse to "How Do I Know?"</p> <p>Have students share the verses they wrote with the rest of the class.</p> <p>Have students assess their work with rubric.</p>

Verse/Lyric Writing Organizer

Title:
What is the song about?
What is the emotion of the song?
Write an example of an existing verse:
How many lines are in the verse?
Is there a rhyme pattern? What is it? (AA, AABB, ABAB, AABCCB)
How many syllables are in each line?
Possible topics for a new verse:
Write one new line:
Write the next line, rhyming if necessary:
Write two more rhyming lines:
Write all four lines together to make a complete new verse:

Sample Verse/Lyric Writing Organizer

Title: <i>How Do I Know? I Read It In A Book</i>
What is the song about? <i>What we learn from books</i>
What is the emotion of the song? <i>Positive, Fun</i>
Example of one verse: <i>Penguins waddle along the way. Dad stands by the eggs all day. You might think it's kind of rude; Mom throws up for the baby's food</i>
How many lines are in the verse? <i>4</i>
Is there a rhyme pattern? What is it? <i>AABB</i>
How many syllables are in each line? <i>8 - 9</i>
Ideas for a new verse: <i>Steps of the water cycle</i>
Ideas for a new line: <i>Water goes round and round</i>
Idea for next line, rhyming if necessary: <i>From the sky to the ground</i>
Write two more rhyming lines: <i>To the sewer from the sink. So we have enough to drink.</i>
Write all four lines together to make a complete new verse: <i>Water goes round and round From the sky to the ground. To the sewer from the sink So we have enough to drink</i>

Elements of Lyric Writing

Meaning	<p>Words are true/factual</p> <p>Original</p> <p>Clever way of saying something</p> <p>Funny</p> <p>Poetic</p> <p>Lyrics match emotion of music</p>
Rhythm	<p>Words fit easily and naturally</p> <p>Accents fit melody</p>
Rhyme	<p>Unusual words (you and to vs. crew and zoo)</p> <p>Multisyllabic (Lincoln and thinkin')</p> <p>Internal rhyme</p> <p>Rhyme schemes like AA, ABAB.</p> <p>Illustrate as needed; refer to "Rhyme Scheme Chart."</p>

Rhyme Scheme Chart

Rhyme scheme is the pattern of rhyming lines in a poem or song. Below are a few examples:

AA--Two lines that rhyme with each other (also called a couplet)

Oh Susanna, don't you cry for me.	A
I come from Alabama with a banjo on my knee.	A

ABAB--Alternating lines that rhyme with each other

There once was a big brown cat	A
That ate a lot of mice	B
He got all round and fat	A
Because they tasted nice.	B

AABCCB--Six lines that follow this pattern

I could while away the hours	A
Conferrin' with the flowers	A
Consultin' with the rain	B
And my head I'd be scratchin'	C
While my thoughts were busy hatchin'	C
If I only had a brain.	B

Some other possibilities for rhyme schemes in songs include AAAA or AAA.

Process for Writing Original Verses

- 1) Teach Curriculum Content for Lesson.
- 2) Introduce Lesson by explaining what students will be doing
- 3) Play Song for Students to Hear
- 3) Teach Students About the Background (or Genre) of the Song.
- 4) Teach the Song to Students.

Play/sing the chorus once or twice for students. Have students join in on chorus. It may be helpful to have lyrics students can see so that they can sing more easily. Lyrics can be projected or written on a board.

Play/sing verses. Have students sing once they are familiar with the melody.

- 5) Analyze the Song

What is the song about?

What is the emotion of the song?

Number of lines in the chorus

Number of lines in the verse

Is there a rhyme pattern?

How many syllables are in each line? (Metrical space)

- 6) Whole Group Modeling/Writing

Brainstorm content/ideas for lyrics

- 7) Write original verse

Revise original verse using rubric?

- 8) Small Group Writing or Individual Writing

Brainstorm

Write

Rehearse

Revise

- 9) Perform/Share

- 10) Lesson Closure and Reflection

Beethoven was forced to practice
locked in his basement one night.
He did not bathe very often
boy he sure did look a fright.

Ludwig studied under Hayden
sometimes it took him a year
to write a good composition.
Then the crowd would stand and cheer.

Ludwig was a great composer
His dad taught him how to play.
At 12 he conducted often
He died in the olden days.

Ludwig Van Beethoven lost his
hearing at an early age.
He became obsessed with music
Sometimes yelling in a rage.

Ludwig was a great musician
Stayed up all night practicing.
He went deaf when he turned twenty -
could not hear a single thing.

Beethoven's teacher let him di-
rect the orchestra sometimes.
He went deaf when he was twenty
but heard music in his mind.

He went deaf in his late twenties
He loved violin at four.
His dad woke him up all the time
Just to hear him play some more.

Ludwig got arrested having
dirty clothes and uncombed hair.
Didn't take care of himself be-
cause he really didn't care.

Singing the Words: Lyric Writing in the Classroom

Music is a central part of most students' lives: they listen, they sing, they dance. Students used this natural affinity to engage in the creative process in order to write lyrics that demonstrate their understanding of various content areas while experiencing the joys of music.

1. Listen to Song.	2. Learn the Background of the Song.	2. Sing the Song.	3. Analyze the Song.
Insert Photos for each.			
Insert Captions			
4. Brainstorm new Lyric Ideas.	5. Write new Lyrics.	6. Rehearse and Perform Song.	7. Reflect
Insert Captions			



Arts Integration...Online!

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/arts-integration>

Visit this site to explore:

The **WHAT** and **WHY** of arts integration

Examine the thinking behind the Kennedy Center's definition for arts integration, explore various viewpoints about the value of arts integration for teaching and learning, and access a wide range of research and publications about arts integration.

Examples of **ARTS INTEGRATION in PRACTICE**

Explore examples of documentation of student learning through the arts and listen to Kennedy Center Teaching Artists describe powerful curriculum connections.

The Kennedy Center's **ARTS INTEGRATION PROGRAM in SCHOOLS**

Learn about the Kennedy Center's Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA) program and explore what you would see inside a CETA school.

A range of arts integration **RESOURCES**

Check out the Kennedy Center's professional learning opportunities for teachers, teaching artists, and arts organizations. Find out how to get involved in its national networks.

The screenshot shows the ArtsEdge website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu with categories: EDUCATORS, Lessons, How To's, Standards, FAMILIES, STUDENTS, THEMES, and MULTIMEDIA. The main content area is titled "Arts Integration" and includes a sub-header "The Kennedy Center's perspective". Below this is a photograph of a modern building and a paragraph of text. To the right, there is a "CONTENT INDEX" section with a list of links for navigating the collection.

The Kennedy Center

