

# Unit 3: Composition and Improvisation

Content Area: **Music**  
Course(s): **Sample Course, Chorus**  
Time Period: **JanFeb**  
Length: **6-8 Weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## **Title Section**

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## **Department of Curriculum and Instruction**



**Belleville Public Schools**

Curriculum Guide

## Composition and Improvisation

### General Music Grade 6-8

**Belleville Board of Education**

**102 Passaic Avenue**

**Belleville, NJ 07109**

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Board Approved Revision: August 22, 2016

## Unit Overview

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- Music composition is the synthesis of combining rhythm, notes and expression. Students will create their own composition to capstone the work that has previously be done with rhythm and notes. Improvisation is a facet of composition. To fully understand improvisation, students need to have a firm foundation in basic music theory. Students will improvise simple rhythms and melodies, starting simple with outlined rules, moving to more abstract parameters to stretch creativity. Famous composers will be highlighted for their notable contributions to music. Students will research the composers of their choice, to better grasp the history and meaning behind each work.

## NJSLS

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VPA.1.1.8.B.1	Analyze the application of the elements of music in diverse Western and non-Western musical works from different historical eras using active listening and by reading and interpreting written scores.
VPA.1.1.8.B.2	Compare and contrast the use of structural forms and the manipulation of the elements of music in diverse styles and genres of musical compositions.
VPA.1.1.8.B.CS1	Common, recognizable musical forms often have characteristics related to specific cultural traditions.
VPA.1.1.8.B.CS2	Compositional techniques used in different styles and genres of music vary according to prescribed sets of rules.
VPA.1.2.8.A.1	Map historical innovations in dance, music, theatre, and visual art that were caused by the creation of new technologies.
VPA.1.2.8.A.2	Differentiate past and contemporary works of dance, music, theatre, and visual art that represent important ideas, issues, and events that are chronicled in the histories of diverse cultures.

VPA.1.2.8.A.3	Analyze the social, historical, and political impact of artists on culture and the impact of culture on the arts.
VPA.1.2.8.A.CS1	Technological changes have and will continue to substantially influence the development and nature of the arts.
VPA.1.2.8.A.CS2	Tracing the histories of dance, music, theatre, and visual art in world cultures provides insight into the lives of people and their values.
VPA.1.2.8.A.CS3	The arts reflect cultural morays and personal aesthetics throughout the ages.
VPA.1.3.8.B.1	Perform instrumental or vocal compositions using complex standard and non-standard Western, non-Western, and avant-garde notation.
VPA.1.3.8.B.2	Perform independently and in groups with expressive qualities appropriately aligned with the stylistic characteristics of the genre.
VPA.1.3.8.B.3	Apply theoretical understanding of expressive and dynamic music terminology to the performance of written scores in the grand staff.
VPA.1.3.8.B.4	Improvise music in a selected genre or style, using the elements of music that are consistent with basic playing and/or singing techniques in that genre or style.
VPA.1.3.8.B.CS1	Western, non-Western, and avant-garde notation systems have distinctly different characteristics.
VPA.1.3.8.B.CS2	Stylistic considerations vary across genres, cultures, and historical eras.
VPA.1.3.8.B.CS3	Understanding of discipline-specific arts terminology (e.g., crescendo, diminuendo, pianissimo, forte, etc.) is a component of music literacy.
VPA.1.3.8.B.CS4	Improvisation is a compositional skill that is dependent on understanding the elements of music as well as stylistic nuances of historical eras and genres of music.

## Exit Skills

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By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- Create a composition based on the assigned parameters
- Understand basic composition software (computer)
- Improvise a simple melody
- Identify and describe the work of famous composers
- Discuss the work of composers being studied in the current concert season
- Perform work by famous composers
- Link history to popular trends in composition, as seen in concert and highlighted music
- Critically listen and analyze professional ensembles performing music of famous composers

## Enduring Understanding

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**Definition:** *Enduring Understandings*

Enduring understandings are statements summarizing important ideas and core processes that are central to a discipline and have lasting value beyond the classroom. They synthesize what students should understand—not just know or do—as a result of studying a particular content area. Moreover, they articulate what students should “revisit” over the course of their lifetimes in relationship to the content area.

- Composers combine all aspects of music theory into compositions
- Trends in composition can be related to current events
- Improvisation is a discipline

## **Essential Questions**

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**Essential Question: A question that lies at the heart of a subject or a curriculum and one that promotes inquiry and the discovery of a subject.**

- They can help students discover patterns in knowledge and solve problems.
- They support inductive teaching—guiding students to discover meaning, which increases motivation to learn.
- They are one of the most powerful tools for helping students think at more complex levels.
- They engage the personal intellect—something that traditional objectives usually fail to do.
- Have no obvious “right” answer
- Raise other important questions, often across subject-area boundaries
- Address a concept
- Raise other important questions
- Naturally and appropriately recur
- Stimulate critical, ongoing rethinking
- Are framed to provoke and sustain student interest

### **What makes a Questions "Essential?"**

- Continues throughout all our lives
- Refers to core ideas and inquiries within a discipline
- Helps students effectively ask questions and make sense of important and complex ideas, knowledge, and know-how
- Engages a specific and diverse set of learners

### **Two Types of Essential Questions:**

- Overarching: The overall “Big Idea”
  - More general, broader
  - Point beyond specific topics or skills
  - Promote the transfer of understanding
- Topical: Unit or lesson specific but still promotes inquiry

- Unit or lesson specific - used to guide individual units or lessons
- Promote inquiry
- Resist obvious answers
- Require explanation and justification

- How did trends in music affect composers?
- How did current events affect compositions?
- Do current events still have an effect on composers?
- What makes the art of improvisation so disciplined?
- How does music software change the art of composition?

## Learning Objectives

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### Tips on Writing Good Learning Objectives

#### Bloom's Taxonomy

#### Applying Bloom's Taxonomy to Learning Objectives

Effective learning objectives need to be observable and/or measureable, and using action verbs is a way to achieve this. Verbs such as “identify”, “argue,” or “construct” are more measureable than vague or passive verbs such as “understand” or “be aware of”. As you develop your syllabus focus on articulating clear learning objectives and then use these objectives to guide class assignments, exams and overall course assessment questions.

#### Sample Learning Objectives for a Lower Division Course

After completing Nutrition 101 *Humans and Food*, students will be able to:

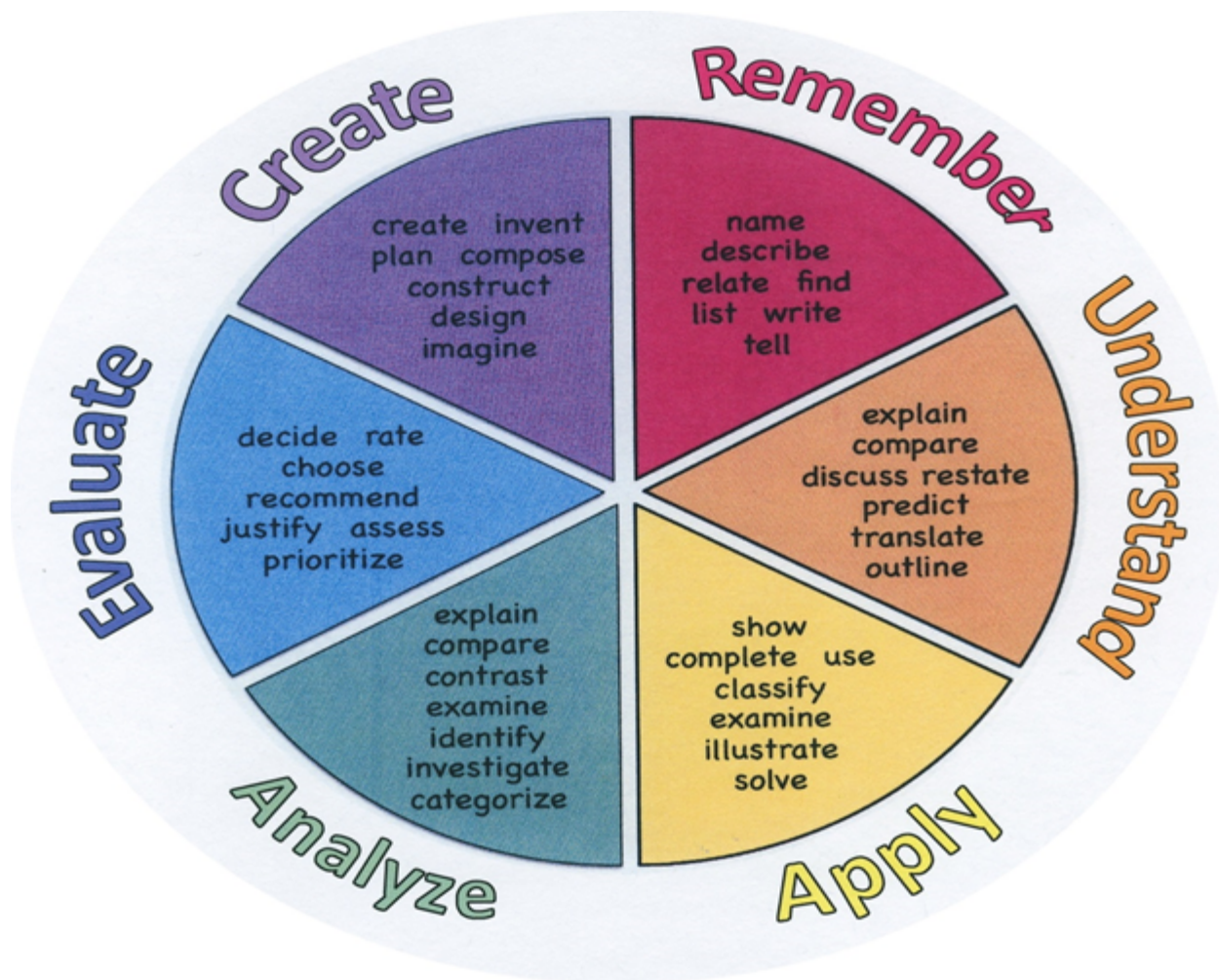
- **Identify** nutrients found in common food sources via the product's nutrition label
- Use computer dietary analysis to assess a 2-day dietary intake and **summarize** results
- **Locate** nutrition-related information on the Internet and use **evaluative** criteria to **identify** reliability of the information

#### Action Verbs

Below are examples of action verbs associated with each level of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. These are useful in writing learning objectives, assignment objectives and exam questions.

Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Choose	Classify	Choose	Categorize	Appraise	Combine
Describe	Defend	Dramatize	Classify	Judge	Compose
Define	Demonstrate	Explain	Compare	Criticize	Construct
Label	Distinguish	Generalize	Differentiate	Defend	Design
List	Explain	Judge	Distinguish	Compare	Develop

Locate	Express	Organize	Identify	Assess	Formulate
Match	Extend	Paint	Infer	Conclude	Hypothesize
Memorize	Give Examples	Prepare	Point out	Contrast	Invent
Name	Illustrate	Produce	Select	Critique	Make
Omit	Indicate	Select	Subdivide	Determine	Originate
Recite	Interrelate	Show	Survey	Grade	Organize
Select	Interpret	Sketch	Arrange	Justify	Plan
State	Infer	Solve	Breakdown	Measure	Produce
Count	Match	Use	Combine	Rank	Role Play
Draw	Paraphrase	Add	Detect	Rate	Drive
Outline	Represent	Calculate	Diagram	Support	Devise
Point	Restate	Change	Discriminate	Test	Generate
Quote	Rewrite	Classify	Illustrate		Integrate
Recall	Select	Complete	Outline		Prescribe
Recognize	Show	Compute	Point out		Propose
Repeat	Summarize	Discover	Separate		Reconstruct
Reproduce	Tell	Divide			Revise
	Translate	Examine			Rewrite
	Associate	Graph			Transform
	Compute	Interpolate			
	Convert	Manipulate			
	Discuss	Modify			
	Estimate	Operate			
	Extrapolate	Subtract			
	Generalize				
	Predict				



- Successfully improvise a basic melody
- Perform compositions from famous composers
- Understand the theory and ideas behind composers' work
- Create a composition using music software

### Interdisciplinary Connections

Please list all and any cross-curricular content standards that link to this Unit.

SOC.6.1.8

U.S. History: America in the World: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.

TECH.8.1.8.A

Technology Operations and Concepts: Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems and operations.

TECH.8.1.8.A.1	Demonstrate knowledge of a real world problem using digital tools.
TECH.8.1.8.B.CS2	Create original works as a means of personal or group expression.
TECH.8.1.8.C.CS1	Interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others by employing a variety of digital environments and media.

## **Alignment to 21st Century Skills & Technology**

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### **Key SUBJECTS AND 21st CENTURY THEMES**

Mastery of key subjects and 21st century themes is essential for all students in the 21st century.

Key subjects include:

- English, reading or language arts
- World languages
- Arts
- Mathematics
- Economics
- Science
- Geography
- History
- Government and Civics

## **21st Century/Interdisciplinary Themes**

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- Civic Literacy
- Environmental Literacy
- Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy
- Global Awareness
- Health Literacy

## **21st Century Skills**

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- Communication and Collaboration
- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical thinking and Problem Solving
- ICT (Information, Communications and Technology) Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Life and Career Skills
- Media Literacy



## Technology Infusion

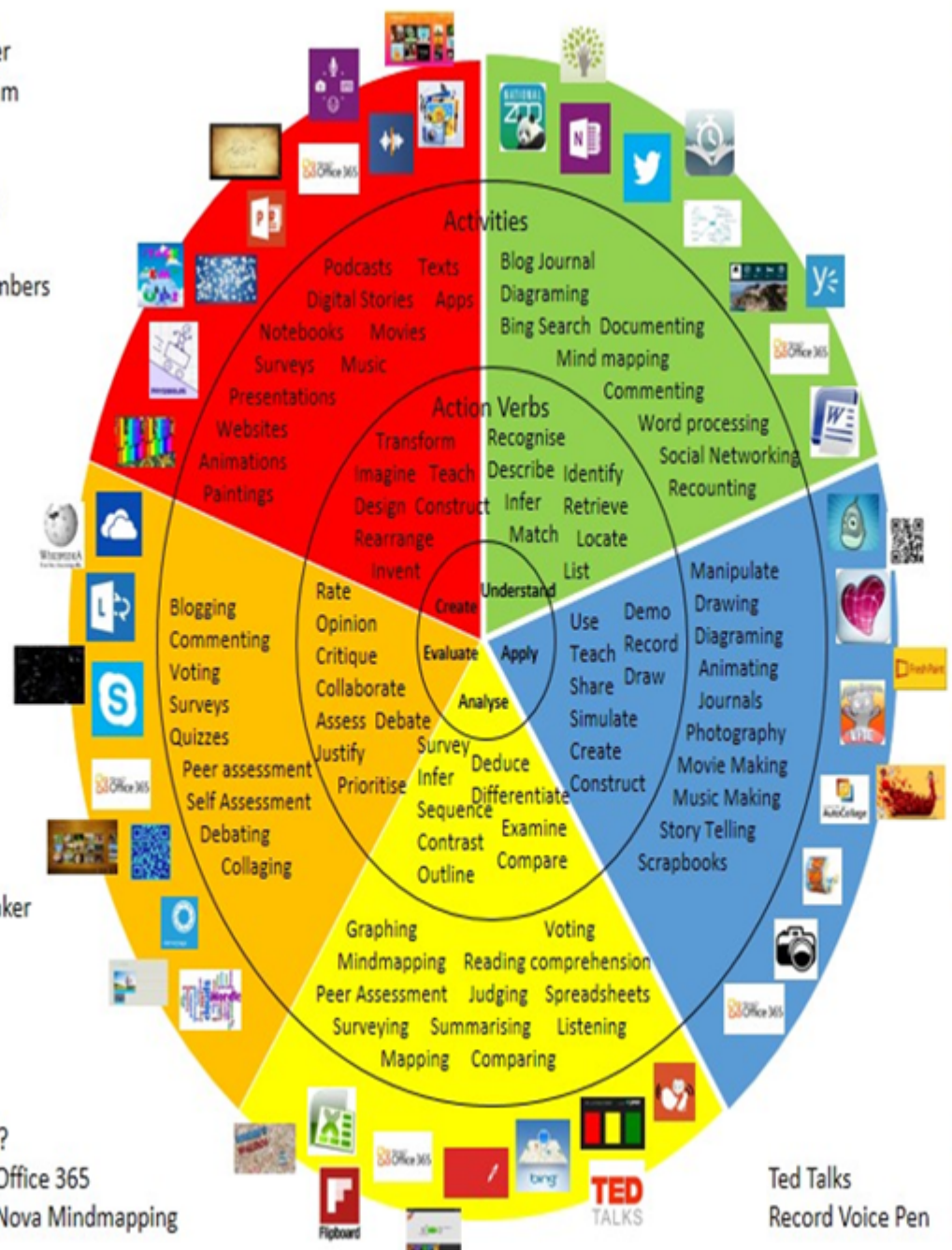
What technology can be used in this unit to enhance learning?

### Win 8.1 Apps/Tools Pedagogy Wheel

Podcasts  
Photostory 3  
Kid Story Builder  
Music Maker Jam  
Paint A Story  
Office 365  
MS PowerPoint  
Stack 'Em Up  
NqSquared Numbers  
Physamajig  
Xylophone 8

Wikipedia  
Skydrive  
Lync  
SkyMap  
Skype  
Office 365  
Puzzle Touch  
Easy QR  
Memorylage  
Life Moments  
Word Cloud Maker

Where's Waldo?  
MS Excel  
Flipboard  
Office 365  
Nova Mindmapping



-Creating music using websites

## **Differentiation**

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As a Reminder:

The basis of good differentiation in a lesson lies in differentiating by content, process, and/or product.

Resources:

- NJDOE: Instructional Supports and Scaffolds for Success in Implementing the Common Core State Standards <http://www.state.nj.us/education/modelcurriculum/success/math/k2/>

## **Special Education**

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- printed copy of board work/notes provided
- additional time for skill mastery
- assistive technology
- behavior management plan
- Center-Based Instruction
- check work frequently for understanding
- computer or electronic device utilizes
- extended time on tests/ quizzes
- have student repeat directions to check for understanding
- highlighted text visual presentation
- modified assignment format
- modified test content
- modified test format
- modified test length
- multiple test sessions
- multi-sensory presentation
- preferential seating
- preview of content, concepts, and vocabulary
- reduced/shortened reading assignments
- Reduced/shortened written assignments
- secure attention before giving instruction/directions
- shortened assignments
- student working with an assigned partner
- teacher initiated weekly assignment sheet
- Use open book, study guides, test prototypes

- teaching key aspects of a topic. Eliminate nonessential information
- using videos, illustrations, pictures, and drawings to explain or clarify
- allowing products (projects, timelines, demonstrations, models, drawings, dioramas, poster boards, charts, graphs, slide shows, videos, etc.) to demonstrate student's learning;
- allowing students to correct errors (looking for understanding)
- allowing the use of note cards or open-book during testing
- decreasing the amount of work presented or required
- having peers take notes or providing a copy of the teacher's notes
- modifying tests to reflect selected objectives
- providing study guides
- reducing or omitting lengthy outside reading assignments
- reducing the number of answer choices on a multiple choice test
- tutoring by peers
- using computer word processing spell check and grammar check features
- using true/false, matching, or fill in the blank tests in lieu of essay tests

## **Intervention Strategies**

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- allowing students to correct errors (looking for understanding)
- teaching key aspects of a topic. Eliminate nonessential information
- allowing products (projects, timelines, demonstrations, models, drawings, dioramas, poster boards, charts, graphs, slide shows, videos, etc.) to demonstrate student's learning
- allowing students to select from given choices
- allowing the use of note cards or open-book during testing
- collaborating (general education teacher and specialist) to modify vocabulary, omit or modify items to reflect objectives for the student, eliminate sections of the test, and determine how the grade will be determined prior to giving the test.
- decreasing the amount of work presented or required
- having peers take notes or providing a copy of the teacher's notes
- marking students' correct and acceptable work, not the mistakes
- modifying tests to reflect selected objectives
- providing study guides
- reducing or omitting lengthy outside reading assignments
- reducing the number of answer choices on a multiple choice test
- tutoring by peers
- using authentic assessments with real-life problem-solving
- using true/false, matching, or fill in the blank tests in lieu of essay tests
- using videos, illustrations, pictures, and drawings to explain or clarify

## **Evidence of Student Learning-CFU's**

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Please list ways educators may effectively check for understanding in this section.

- Admit Tickets
- Anticipation Guide
- Common benchmarks
- Compare & Contrast
- Create a Multimedia Poster
- Define
- Describe
- Evaluate
- Evaluation rubrics
- Exit Tickets
- Explaining
- Fist- to-Five or Thumb-Ometer
- Illustration
- Journals
- KWL Chart
- Newspaper Headline
- Outline
- Question Stems
- Quickwrite
- Quizzes
- Red Light, Green Light
- Self- assessments
- Socratic Seminar
- Study Guide
- Teacher Observation Checklist
- Think, Pair, Share
- Think, Write, Pair, Share
- Top 10 List
- Unit tests

## **Primary Resources**

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Please list all resources available to you that are located either within the district or that can be obtained by district resources.

-Concert Music

- noteflight.com

## **Ancillary Resources**

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Please list ALL other resources available to strengthen your lesson.

-Professional recordings of concert and supplemental music

-musictheory.net

-youtube.com

## **Sample Lesson**

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One Lesson per Curriculum must be in this lesson plan template. I.e. one lesson in one unit

Unit Name:

NJSLS:

Interdisciplinary Connection:

Statement of Objective:

Anticipatory Set/Do Now:

Learning Activity:

Student Assessment/CFU's:

Materials:

21st Century Themes and Skills:

Differentiation/Modifications:

Integration of Technology:

