

# Unit 03: Reading and Interpreting Music for Expression

Content Area: **Music**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**  
Length: **ongoing**  
Status: **Published**

## Brief Summary of Unit

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Individual and communal creative expression is inherent in music-making. Students will develop an understanding of the ways composers, musicians, and performers can shape the elements of dynamics, phrasing, and melodic contour.

## Transfer

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## Essential Questions

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- • How can I be an expressive musician, both individually and within the ensemble?
- • How is music an expressive medium?

## Essential Understandings

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- • elements of vocal technique, including diction and breathing, have expressive qualities and can affect the interpretation of a piece.
- • it is the job of the conductor and the entire ensemble to interpret a piece of music using the information on the score, information given by the composer, and outside information gleaned from research and experience.
- • large contrast in dynamics creates interest for the listener.
- • the expressive elements of music can be used to convey both musical and non-musical ideas.
- • there can be many interpretations of a piece of music.
- • to perform a piece well, one should understand its basic form and structure, as well as the composer's intentions.

## Students Will Know

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- • how to add musical expression to a piece when there are no markings providing direction.
- • how to describe the texture, tone, and color of the music being performed.
- • how to interpret all terms and symbols which denote dynamic, articulation, tempo and other expressive elements found in a given musical score.

- • how to interpret and perform a melody in a variety of ways, using different musical expressive techniques.
- • how to interpret, debate, and execute expressive elements found in a musical score.
- • how to judge the appropriateness of a dynamic or articulation within the context of a musical phrase or work.

## **Students Will Be Skilled At**

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## **Evidence/Performance Tasks**

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- • evaluate the appropriateness of certain expressive elements within the context of a piece of music and offer suggestions for variety through experimentation.
- • explore and reflect on the essential questions through discussions and journaling.
- • interpret expressive conducting gestures performed by teacher during rehearsals and performance.
- • perform expressive elements accurately and appropriately, as a class and individually.
- • reflect upon how music's expressive qualities affect them and their own emotional states.
- • write responses to written prompts about musical pieces from the choral repertoire, comparing or describing expressive qualities of pieces.

## **Learning Plan**

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- • Preview the essential questions and connect to learning throughout the course.
- • Students and teacher engage in various kinesthetic activities that relate to dynamics, articulation, and phrasing as they relate to the repertoire being studied.
- • Students and teacher experience, identify, and discuss dynamics, articulations, and phrasings from within the choral repertoire and from various recorded examples.
- • Students and teacher isolate sections of choral repertoire which can be performed in numerous ways. The class experiments with various dynamics, articulations, and phrasings and debate the appropriateness of each.
- • Students perform repertoire expressively for school and community concerts and events.
- • Teacher draws student attention to the manner in which diction might affect the expressive elements of the piece of music and how the meaning of the piece is reflected through the dynamics and phrasing.
- • Teacher facilitates further student exploration of unique means of expression in musical performance.
- • The teacher records various rehearsals and concert performances. The class listens, critiques, and assesses the performance of expressive elements in the pieces. Students also share specific antidotal evidence provided by audience members listening as to the effectiveness of the performance.

## **Materials**

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## **Suggested Strategies for Modifications**

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- • Allow students to choose from several journal, essay, or discussion prompts and allow for multiple methods of response.
- • Provide ample space for all students to participate and respond during class discussions.