

# Unit 06: Analyzing and Critiquing Music and Musical Performance

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

## Brief Summary of Unit

---

: By listening to, looking at, and performing music, students will gain and apply skills which allow them to identify and understand common musical elements, characteristics, and expressive devices. Student will listen to, analyze, evaluate, and critique music using proper music terminology and will develop informed judgments and attitudes about the music they hear. By listening to other choirs as well as their own performances, students gain insight into their own sound and how it compares to others.

## Transfer

---

## Essential Questions

---

- • What makes a piece of music beautiful?
- • Why is it valuable to listen to, analyze, and describe music and music performances?

## Essential Understandings

---

- • awareness is essential to careful listening.
- • critical listening means that sometimes one's emotional response is ignored so the musical elements can be judged with an objective ear.
- • each thoughtful opinion of music is valid.
- • reflection and self-assessment are essential to determining areas in need of improvement.
- • using specific criteria for the evaluation of music aids in and furthers one's appreciation of a piece of music.
- • listening to and evaluating performances of other musical ensembles promotes the continual development of musicianship.

## Students Will Know

---

- • acceptable performance practices in relation to setting, occasion, and musical genre.
- • how to form and use appropriate criteria for evaluation of quality music, specifically choral music.

- • how to listen to and describe music objectively and critically, in writing and discussion.
- • how to use appropriate musical vocabulary and terminology in the evaluation of musical performances, including their own.
- • the difference between critically and casually listening to music.
- • the differences in the sounds of various musical timbres and colors (e.g. bright/dark, back/forward, light/heavy, etc.).
- • why they prefer some types of music more than others.

## **Students Will Be Skilled At**

---

## **Evidence/Performance Tasks**

---

- • accurately analyze and describe performances, using correct music terminology, both written and orally.
- • evaluate one's own progress in the choral rehearsal and assess what aspects need attention.
- • explore and reflect on the essential questions through discussions and journaling.
- • identify elements that create an accurate, appropriate, and pleasing performance.

## **Learning Plan**

---

- • Preview the essential questions and connect to learning throughout the course.
- • Students and teacher discuss, describe and evaluate recordings of professional performances and their own performances.
- • Students and teacher list those musical elements heard to create a common criteria by which students evaluate music and musical performances.
- • Students compare and contrast different performances (recordings) of the same piece and discuss the musical elements that varied and how it affected the overall performance.
- • Students experience music of varying cultures, styles, and genres through both repertoire and recordings. Teacher facilitates the discovery of specific musical elements (pitch, intonation, rhythm, pulse, dynamics, articulations, diction, etc.) and structures (form, text, context, composer etc.) by focusing student listening.
- • Students explore what it means to be aware in listening and how awareness affects performance. This is done using recordings and several of the choir's first performances.
- • Students utilized the information they glean from evaluation to better their own performances.
- • Students write thoughtful musical critiques and evaluations using the established criteria and musical terminology.

## **Materials**

---

## **Suggested Strategies for Modifications**

---

- • Allow students to choose from several journal, essay, or discussion prompts and allow for multiple methods of response.
- • Allow students to select a fewer amount of musical elements to deal with in their criteria, so they have fewer elements to listen for and can listen and respond with more depth.
- • Provide ample space for all students to participate and respond during class discussions.