Unit 09: Composing a Melody

Content Area: **Music**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 2**
Length: **2 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Students will learn about the elements that make up a melody. Students will study melodies through listening and written musical examples, and then create their own melodies under certain parameters, including starting pitch, key, time signature, and length. Students will perform or have their melodies performed so that their classmates can critique and respond to what they hear.

Revised: July 2026

Standards

Information Literacy

This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

ELD standards:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wdmsiGOdCHlrjU-WPvAtENnEgi0EStZXo0uiFYv1Nu4/edit

1.3E.12prof.Cr1a	Generate melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas for compositions or improvisations using digital tools.
1.3B.12prof.Cr1a	Describe how sounds and short musical ideas can be used to represent personal experiences, moods, visual images, and/or storylines.
1.3E.12prof.Cr2a	Select melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas to develop into a larger work using digital tools and resources.
1.3B.12prof.Cr2a	Assemble and organize sounds or short musical ideas to create initial expressions of selected experiences, moods, images or storylines.
1.3B.12prof.Cr2b	Identify and describe the development of sounds or short musical ideas in drafts of music within simple forms (e.g., one part, cyclical, binary).
1.3E.12prof.Cr3a	Drawing on feedback from teachers and peers, develop and implement strategies to improve and refine the technical and expressive aspects of draft compositions and

	improvisations.
1.3B.12prof.Cr3a	Identify, describe and apply teacher-provided criteria to assess and refine the technical and expressive aspects of evolving drafts leading to final versions.
1.3E.12prof.Cr3b	Share compositions or improvisations that demonstrate musical and technological craftsmanship as well as the use of digital tools and resources in developing and organizing musical ideas.
1.3B.12prof.Cr3b	Share music through the use of notation, performance or technology, and demonstrate how the elements of music have been employed to realize expressive intent.
1.3B.12prof.Pr4	Selecting, analyzing and interpreting work.
1.3E.12prof.Pr4a	Develop and explain the criteria used for selecting varied sound resources based on interest, music reading skills, and an understanding of the performer's musical and technological skill.
1.3B.12prof.Pr4a	Identify and select specific excerpts, passages, or sections in musical works that express a personal experience, mood, visual image, or storyline in simple forms (e.g., one-part, cyclical, binary).
1.3E.12prof.Pr4b	Describe how context, structural aspects of the music, and digital media/tools inform prepared and improvised performances.
1.3E.12prof.Pr4c	Identify the context, expressive challenges, and use of digital tools in a varied repertoire of music influence prepared or improvised performances.
1.3B.12prof.Pr4b	Analyze how the elements of music (including form) of selected works relate to style and mood and explain the implications for rehearsal or performance.
1.3E.12prof.Pr5	Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.
1.3B.12prof.Pr4c	Develop interpretations of works based on an understanding of the use of elements of music, style and mood, explaining how the interpretive choices reflect the creator's intent.
1.3B.12prof.Pr5	Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.
1.3E.12prof.Pr5a	Identify and implement rehearsal strategies to improve the technical and expressive aspects of prepared and improvised performances in a varied repertoire of music.
1.3B.12prof.Pr5a	Create rehearsal plans for works, identifying repetition and variation within the form.
1.3B.12prof.Pr5b	Using established criteria and feedback, identify the way(s) in which performances convey the elements of music, style and mood.
1.3B.12prof.Pr5c	Identify and implement strategies for improving the technical and expressive aspects of multiple works.
1.3B.12prof.Pr6	Conveying meaning through art.
1.3E.12prof.Pr6a	Using digital tools, demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music.
1.3E.12prof.Pr6b	Demonstrate an understanding of the context of music through prepared and improvised performances.
1.3B.12prof.Pr6a	Share live or recorded performances of works (both personal and others') and explain how the elements of music are used to convey intent.
1.3B.12prof.Pr6b	Identify how compositions are appropriate for an audience or context, and how this will shape future compositions.
1.3E.12prof.Re7a	Cite reasons for choosing music based on the use of the elements of music, digital and electronic aspects, and connections to interest or purpose.
1.3E.12prof.Re7b	Explain how knowledge of the structure (e.g., repetition, similarities, contrasts), technological aspects, and purpose of the music informs the response.
1.3B.12prof.Re7a	Apply teacher-provided criteria to select music that expresses a personal experience, mood, visual image, or storyline in simple forms (e.g., one-part, cyclical, binary), and

	describe the choices as models for composition.
1.3B.12prof.Re7b	Analyze aurally and/or by reading the elements of music (including form) of musical works, relating them to style, mood and context, and describe how the analysis provides models for personal growth as a composer, performer and/or listener.
1.3B.12prof.Re8a	Develop and explain interpretations of varied works, demonstrating an understanding of the composer's intent by citing technical and expressive aspects as well as the style/genre of each work.
1.3E.12prof.Re9a	Evaluate music using criteria based on analysis, interpretation, digital and electronic features, and personal interests.
1.3B.12prof.Re9a	Describe the effectiveness of the technical and expressive aspects of selected music and performances, demonstrating an understanding of the fundamentals of music theory.
1.3B.12prof.Re9b	Describe the way(s) in which critiquing others' work and receiving feedback from others can be applied in the personal creative process.
1.3B.12prof.Cn10	Synthesizing and relating knowledge and personal experiences to create products.
1.3B.12prof.Cn10a	Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.
1.3B.12prof.Cn11	Relating artistic ideas and works within societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding.
1.3B.12prof.Cn10a	Demonstrate how interests, knowledge and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.
1.3B.12prof.Cn11a	Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts and daily life.
1.3B.12prof.Cn11	Relating artistic ideas and works within societal, cultural, and historical contexts to deepen understanding.
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Essential Questions

- How can a melody be constructed to convey a specific personal experience, mood, or visual storyline?
- How do composers balance repetition and variation to make a melody both recognizable and engaging?
- What do I hear when I listen to music?
- What musical elements make a good melody?

Enduring Understandings

- A musical phrase relies on contour and cadences to guide the listener.
- Music is a vehicle for narrative and personal expression.
- Singable and memorable melodies are formulaic and have specific characteristics.

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- A musical phrase ends with a resting point, or a cadence.

- Composing is about a balance between repetition and variation.
- Composing singable/playable melodies.
- How to listen to and look at notation of melodies and describe their characteristics.
- Melodies are related to the scale or key they are written in.
- Melodies can be broken into phrases and have resting points called cadences.
- Melodies have line, shape, and contour, which can be described as scalar, conjunct, or disjunct.
- The rules for writing a "good" singable/playable and memorable melody.
- The smallest recognizable unit of music is a motif.

Learning Plan

- Preview the essential questions and return to them throughout the course, in discussion and written assignments.
- Students and teacher perform composed melodies and critique them according to the guidelines.
- Students are given the opportunity to write a melody, beginning under strict guidelines which may include, only four measures long, must start and end on the tonic note of the key, the ending note is on a strong beat, the motion is scalar or jumps of thirds that outline a triad, there is as repeated motif, etc.
- Students continue practicing melody writing with longer pieces and assignments, culminating in a final melody project that might run 24-32 measures, demonstrating understanding of the guidelines for writing melodies. Students and teacher create a rubric together for the assessment of the final melodies.
- Teacher and students examine various major melodies in different keys and time signatures, performed and written in notation and discuss their characteristics.
- Teacher provides students with vocabulary and terminology related to melodies including, conjunct/disjunct, phrase, cadence point, scalar or step-wise, repetition and variation.
- To extend student learning, student who are successful in composing the melodies could then add simple chords to harmonize their melodies.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Performing Arts students demonstrate differentiated proficiency according to their ability to answer the essential questions through formative and summative assessments. Evidence of progression may be demonstrated in divergent ways through the Artistic Processes of Creating, Performing/ Presenting/ Producing, Connecting, and Responding.

- Listening to musical examples students will draw and discuss the shape and contour of the melody they are listening to.
- Listening to musical examples students will write descriptive statements about the melody they are listening to, using accurate musical terminology
- Students compose a longer final melody project that might run 24-32 measures in length and is performed for the class by students and teacher. Students create rubric and self-assess their melody project.
- Students compose a variety of melodies that conform to the guidelines for singable/playable and memorable melodies. Students can describe what they composed using appropriate and accurate musical terminology.

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations: Performing Arts Accommodations & Modifications