



THE JOHNNY MERCER
FOUNDATION



Hooray For Hollywood: Unit 3: Lessons 1 & 2

Hooray for Hollywood" (1937) By Johnny Mercer and Richard Whiting

Lesson Overview

These lessons are an introduction to Johnny Mercer, the Great American Songbook, and lyric writing. Classes will receive the original Accentuate the Positive: Guide to Lyric Writing for Kids programming. Students will be exposed to different subject matters and will have opportunities to learn tools for lyric writing and creating personal lyrics, all while fulfilling national core standards. Have fun!

Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson students will be able to:

Know more about songwriter Johnny Mercer

Have more songwriting skills: Specificity, Alliteration, Rhyme

Write lyrics for a song

Standards

Nat'l Core Arts: Creating & Interpretation. Not only are the students going to be creating lyrics as a group this time, they will be encouraged to listen to existing Johnny Mercer music and interpret the material demonstrating their knowledge of expressive qualities like dynamics and tempos as well as make interpretations based on what they hear.

English/Lang Arts Standards: STRANDS—Vocabulary Acquisition & Use. Students will create lyrics using specific nouns, adjectives, and verbs to express historical and social contexts and experiences. They will be reviewing historical people, places, and things from the 1950's using Johnny Mercer material and then applying the use of specificity with people, places, and things of today.

Top of Form

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Time Required

One class period of at least 45-50 minutes

Lesson Preparation

Ask students what music they like and have them start to investigate who wrote those songs.

Materials:

Accentuate the Positive: Guide to Lyric Writing for Kids booklet

Whiteboard space for teacher/teaching artist

Writing paper and pencils

Resources:

The Johnny Mercer Foundation: www.johnnymercer.org

If needed, refer to the video of the educator workshop on the Accentuate the Positive webpage.

Johnny Mercer Collections at Georgia State University: <http://library.gsu.edu/mercer>



Hooray For Hollywood: Unit 3: Lessons 1 & 2 (con't)

Lesson Procedure

Introduce songwriting skills: Specificity

The importance of specificity in storytelling and songwriting.

Play the song "Hooray for Hollywood" and ask students to follow along with lyrics (see page 12 of the Accentuate the Positive: Guide to Lyric Writing for Kids booklet)

What is the message of the song?

What is the mood of the song? (Is this a silly song or a serious song and why?)

What is the evidence in the lyrics and music to support answer?

Circle the rhymes.

Review understanding of lyrics – clarify definitions of words they may not understand.

Introduce songwriting tool – Alliteration

Explore alliteration in title, "Hooray for Hollywood."

Practice making sentences with alliteration (can use letter of first name).

Discuss the background of the song (see below: Information about "Hooray for Hollywood").

Explore specificity referencing people, places, and things in the lyrics (see page 12 of the Accentuate the Positive: Guide to Lyric Writing for Kids booklet).

Identify specific people, places, things, and slang from this decade and write in the chart (see page 17 of the Accentuate the Positive: Guide to Lyric Writing for Kids booklet)

Brainstorm Song Ideas (This can be an individual or group writing activity): *Hooray for* _____.

(e.g. Locations, School Name, Holiday's, Special Events, etc.)

Specific adjectives and qualities that describe their chosen topic (noun).

Have students share their work (If doing this as a class, recite it as a class).

Review the importance of copyright and have the students copyright their songs.

Extension

Rewrite the lyrics to HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD, updating it with references from people places and things from our decade.

Students can create a word collage: 1) Flip through the pages of magazines and newspapers that you think represent your city and town. The pictures could be of buildings, people, fashion, culture, art, music, anything! Choose words to go along with the photos. 2) Now make a collage on an empty shoebox, and they'll have a great container to put their things in.

Lesson Evaluation

Teacher observation of participation.

Evaluation of song lyrics using a rubric.

Student self-evaluation of process and project.



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Information about “Hooray For Hollywood”

1. Written in 1937 for the movie *Hollywood Hotel*.
2. Was a collaboration with Richard Whiting, one of Mercer’s more frequent songwriting partners in the early stages of his career.
3. Has evolved often since its original release – lyrics were updated to make more timely references, and today it’s mostly performed as an instrumental melody.

From *Johnny Mercer: Southern Songwriter for the World*:

The lyrics to “Hooray for Hollywood” are satirical and funny; Mercer explained, “Hollywood seemed like a big put-on to me and I just tried to make a little fun of it.” Despite this, it has become a staple soundtrack piece for the film/entertainment industry. For example, the instrumental version is used as the opening music for Academy Awards ceremonies and the TV program *Entertainment Tonight* used it for years to introduce segments.

Citation: Eskew, Glenn T. *Johnny Mercer : Southern Songwriter for the World*. Athens : The University of Georgia, 2013.