



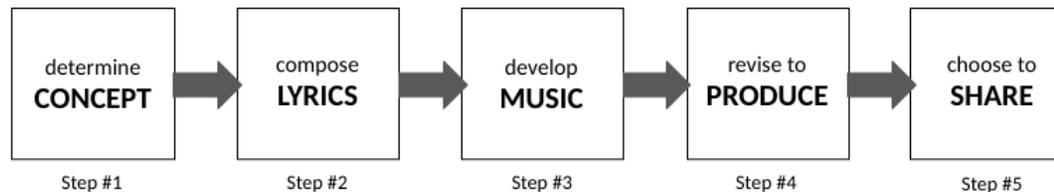
The Songwriting Process Instructional Strategy Resource Video Series

Developed and Produced by Liz Davis, Head of Secondary Curriculum & Partnerships
with Eugene H. Russell IV, Composer and Teaching Artist

Overview

Presented by the Johnny Mercer Foundation and the Alliance Theatre, the *Songwriting Process Instructional Strategy Resource Video Series* is designed to provide educators with specific tools to incorporate and/or enhance Songwriting in their curriculum and practice. To model these engaging and practical strategies, Eugene H. Russell IV guides a group of high school students through the Songwriting Process outlined below.

The Songwriting Process



Source Text

These videos illustrate an arts-integrated approach to teaching, meeting evolving objectives in Theater, Music, and English Language Arts. To initiate the Songwriting Process, the students that appear in these videos explored and responded to a classic literary work: *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau. This source text is offered as an example; teachers of all content areas are encouraged to explore how the Songwriting Process may connect to their curriculum.

“To be awake is to be alive. We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep.”

- Henry David Thoreau

Video Series:

The Songwriting Process [Video Link]	Instructional Strategy
Step #1: Determine Concept  View Video	Strategy: “Just One Word” <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brainstorm a list of themes presented by the source text.• Pick (1) theme that is personally relevant and summarize that theme in “just one word.”• That one word is now a spark that answers the question, “What will your song be about?”
Step #2: Compose Lyrics  View Video	Strategy: “Word Dump” <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Return to the source text to re-read an excerpt that illustrates the selected theme.• Create a list of all words and phrases that resonate, relate, or respond to the excerpt.• Freely write poetry that incorporates some of these words and phrases to create first draft lyrics.
Step #3: Develop Music  View Video	Strategy: “Soundscape” <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the poetry (first draft lyrics) aloud.• As a group, improvise short musical ideas that support the reading both in style and tone.• Layer those sounds to create a compelling, cumulative effect.
Step #4: Revise to Produce  View Video	Strategy: “More Of / Less Of” <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the lyrics and music produced so far.• Evaluate the song by answering the following questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What’s working? (What does the song need more of?)○ What’s not working? (What does the song need less of?)• Revise the lyrics and music according to the response.
Step #5: Choose to Share  View Performance  View Video	Strategy: “I Liked / I Wonder” <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some composers may opt-in to present a final song for an audience.• After they share, audience members can provide positive, constructive feedback using the following framework:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Compliment: “I liked...”○ Question: “I wonder...”• Alternatively, this strategy works as a method for Self-Reflection as well.