

MUSIC

An Introduction

Music encompasses a broad array of organized expressive sound, both with and without words. Across the centuries and around the world, music has been produced using a wide array of media such as created instruments, including traditional acoustic and electronic sources; environmental sound sources ranging from natural objects, such as logs and rocks, to household utensils, such as spoons and washboards; and the human body, from vibrating vocal cords to stamping feet. The literature of music consists of an enormous range of repertoire from a variety of classical, folk and popular traditions, some of it preserved in notation and much of it passed down through oral tradition. The [Connecticut Arts Standards](#) embrace the broad and diverse nature of the art form of music through the music making processes of creating, performing, responding, and connecting.

The purpose of music education is to prepare students for a lifetime of active, satisfying involvement with music in a variety of forms. Contemporary life is filled with musical encounters. Music education should empower students to create, refine and notate their own original music; read, interpret and perform music literature created by themselves and others; and respond with understanding to others' musical works and performances.

Children's capacity to respond to music begins at least by birth, and — according to considerable evidence — possibly in the womb. Parents and preschool teachers should sing to, move with and play music for their children. Preschool teachers should incorporate a rich variety of other musical experiences on a daily basis, such as by using music for transitions between activities. Elementary and middle school children should receive comprehensive instruction in music by high quality teachers at least twice per week as well as experience music in their regular classrooms, such as by studying the music of various cultures in social studies classes or responding to music as a writing prompt. During the upper-elementary grades interested students should have opportunities to begin participating in chorus and to begin the study of band and/or stringed instruments. (Although, ideally string instruction should begin as early as kindergarten.) During middle school, if not before, all students should have opportunities to compose music using electronic technologies, and to study a harmonizing instrument such as the guitar or keyboard, as part of their required general music courses.

In addition to this core musical study, students should have opportunities to participate in choral and instrumental ensembles. High schools should offer students sequential elective courses in vocal and instrumental ensemble (traditional, jazz and other ethnic forms), music composition (using electronic and other means), and harmonizing instruments (guitar, keyboard). Advanced and highly motivated students should have opportunities to elect Advanced Placement courses, such as music theory.

The Artistic Processes in Music

CREATE

Musicians generate ideas through innovative combinations of musical elements, structure, expression, and purpose. Planning new music involves experimentation in the processes of improvisation, arranging, and composing. Constructing a work from generated ideas involves creating an organization for structures, making choices about form, and documenting the musical piece. The design process includes evaluation and refinement of the work using an applied criterion. The culmination of creation and communication is sharing the work with others in a presentation and performance.

PERFORM

Performing involves sharing previously created works with an audience. Selecting music of appropriate technical skill, purpose and context is the first step in the process of musical performance. Musicians follow a plan conceived by a composer by analyzing their intent, however there is an opportunity for creative interpretation within the performance. Refining a musical work involves rehearsing the musical work to improve the performance. Presenting is often associated with sharing in formal settings with an audience, but also includes producing the performance for digital purposes. Evaluation of performance will include the response of the audience.

RESPOND

Musicians evaluate the quality of musical works and performances by selecting music to analyze and interpret. Responding to music involves analyzing the social, cultural and historical context of the selected musical work. Musicians interpret the composer's and performers' intent through their use of the elements, structure, and expressive qualities in the musical work or performance. The quality of the musical work or performance is evaluated through established criteria judging the effectiveness of artistic work.

CONNECT

Connecting requires the musician to use personal experiences and gained knowledge to inform their own creative works. They relate musical ideas with the world around them; to society, culture, and history for a deeper understanding of the work, performance practice, and appreciation of the composer.