



Create Your Own Theme Music

4th Grade Visual & Performing Arts

California Common Core Standard 4.MU:Re7.2—Demonstrate and explain how responses to music are informed by the structure, the use of the elements of music, and context (such as ~~personal, social and cultural~~).

Music is considered an art form. It is a method of expressing emotion and telling stories, although it should be noted that not everyone likes music or feels inspired by it. Music is extremely diverse, meaning that there are so many different kinds of music, feelings expressed by music, elements to music, and more. **Musical elements** are things such as **lyrics** (words sung or spoken), **volume**, **instruments**, **pitch** (individual notes sung or played on an instrument), **key** (the set of eight whole notes in which a song is written), etc., that make a song what it is. For example, let's take a look at the elements of rap music. Rap music always has lyrics. Often, those lyrics are more spoken than sung; they don't typically follow a **melody** (a series of pitches that create a tune), but sometimes they do. Rap music often has instrumentation to accompany the lyrics. It also often has a strong, clear **beat** or **rhythm**.

All of these elements help create a message or tell a story. As a listener, what messages do you hear when you listen to certain songs? What emotions do you feel? As a **composer**, or musical writer, what messages and emotions do you want others to take away from your music? Let's practice interpreting music and then create our own theme songs!

Materials (ALL ARE OPTIONAL):

- Pen or pencil
- Piece of paper
- Recording device
- Instruments

Developmental Objectives/Domains: By completing this activity, you will

- 1.) Develop a sense of how and why music is composed

- 2.) Understand the inspiration and emotion behind music
- 3.) Enhance your understanding of your emotions, how they are influenced, and how to express them through music

Procedure:

1. Let's first get some practice in listening to and interpreting how music makes us feel. Visit this [YouTube compilation](#) of ten songs. Notice that the name of the video is "Top 10 Most Beautiful Songs of All Time." This, of course, is an opinion meaning that the person who made the video is deeply moved by these ten songs in particular. What do you think it is about these songs that moves that person so much?
2. As the song clips play, think about how each one makes you feel. Do you feel happy, sad, scared, angry? This can be tricky. Sometimes thoughts and feelings come to mind and leave very quickly. Pay attention to those quick thoughts. Sometimes they move so fast, you can't grab a hold of them, but try.
3. Think about the elements of each song. Does it have lyrics that tell a sad or happy story? What instruments are played? Is it a fast song? Do the pitches get higher or lower? Is it a loud song? Is it quiet? Does it somehow make you feel sad? *Note that musical elements usually change throughout a song.
4. Now that you've put some thought into musical elements of songs that already exist, it's time to create your own song! This can be whatever you want it to be—just do what makes sense to you. Think about a certain feeling you have or had, and base your song off of it. *Exs: Are you excited for something? When you woke up this morning, did you feel very sleepy? Are you bored?* Then think about musical elements that you just experienced and try to apply those things to your theme song. Here are some things to think about:
 - a. Your song can be as long as you'd like it to be—from 5 seconds to 5 minutes
 - b. Your song can have lyrics if you'd like it to.
 - c. Your song can be a simple tune. Maybe you want it to be just a few pitches that progress upward or downward.
 - d. Do you play an instrument? Include that in your song if you'd like. If you don't play an instrument, can you create one if you want to? Simply tapping your foot or hand on a surface could be an instrument. Blowing into a glass bottle is another way to create an instrument. Experiment some.
 - e. Would you like it to be sung? Would you want just one person to sing it, or several?
5. Optional: Once you've finished, record your song somehow. You can record a video or an audio clip on a phone for example. If you wrote lyrics, you can write those down. If you know how to read and write music, you can write down the notes.

