artsNOW
Integrated learning solutions

UNIT: STARS & PLANETS
PLANET MUSIC & MOVEMENT RESPONSES (Lesson 5 of 5)
Grade Band: 4
Content Focus: Music & Science



LEARNING DESCRIPTION

Students will listen to music and identify various musical components, relate those components to attributes of planets. Students will then create movements to demonstrate those attributes with music.

LEARNING TARGETS

Essential Questions	"I Can" Statements
How do the physical characteristics of stars differ from those of planets, and what methods can we use to observe and understand these differences?	I can listen and respond to music with words and movement as it relates to attributes of the planets.

GEORGIA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
S4E1: Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to compare and contrast the physical attributes of stars and planets.	ESGM4.RE.1 Listen to, analyze, and describe music. ESGM4.RE.2 Evaluate music and music performances.

SOUTH CAROLINA STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards	Arts Standards
	Anchor Standard 6: I can analyze music. **Anchor Standard 9:** I can relate music to other arts disciplines, other subjects, and career paths.

KEY VOCABULARY

Content Vocabulary	Arts Vocabulary

• (Composition) Gaseous - A planet composed of mostly gasses
 	
• (Composition) Rocky - A planet composed of mostly rocks
 	
• Orbit - The path an object takes in space
 	
• Planet - Large natural objects that orbit around a star
 	
• Relative size - How the size of one object compares to another
 	
• Satellite - Any object that orbits another object
 	
• Star - A massive, luminous sphere held together by its own gravity
 	
• Telescope - A tool used to observe far away objects
	• Composer - The person who writes the music
	
	• Gustav Holst - (1874–1934) An English composer, arranger, and teacher, best known for his orchestral suite "The Planets"
	
	• Tempo - The speed of the beat
	  ○ Allegro - Fast
	  ○ Adagio - Slow
	
	• Dynamics - Loud and soft sounds; volume
	  ○ Crescendo - Get louder
	  ○ Decrescendo - Get softer (synonymous with diminuendo)
	  ○ Piano - Soft
	  ○ Forte - Loud

MATERIALS

- Gustav Holst - Mercury
- Gustav Holst - Venus
- Gustav Holst - Earth
- Gustav Holst - Mars
- Gustav Holst - Jupiter
- Gustav Holst - Saturn
- Gustav Holst - Uranus
- Gustav Holst - Neptune
- Music vocabulary cards
- Planet information pages

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Opening/Activating Strategy
• Play a portion of Gustav Holst's composition "Earth, The Bringer of Life"

- Engage students in the Hear, Think, Wonder Artful Thinking Routine.
    - What do you hear?
    - What do you think about what you've heard?
    - What do you wonder about this piece?
- Introduce the composer as Gustav Holst, born in 1874 in England. Tell students that he was most famous for his orchestral composition called "The Planets".

Work Session

Teacher Note: Students will have already learned about planet attributes: Terrestrial/rocky, gaseous, size, rotation speed (slow or fast), and color.

- Teach or review musical vocabulary:
    - Tempo - The speed of the beat
        - Allegro - Fast
        - Adagio - Slow
    - Dynamics - Loud and soft sounds; volume
        - Crescendo - Get louder
        - Decrescendo - Get softer (synonymous with diminuendo)
        - Piano - Soft
        - Forte - Loud
- Review listening skills as they relate to music.
- Set a purpose for listening:
    - Say to students, "When you listen to the next piece of music I want you to listen for how loud or soft the music is. Is it fast or slow? Does it start slow and get faster or start fast and get slower? Or start softly and become LOUD?!"
    - Tell students that it is the song they listened to earlier. It is a composition that is written about one of the planets.
    - Ask students to think about what they know about planets and how the tempo (fast and slow) and dynamics (loud and soft) might tell the listener about the planet.
    - Play EARTH, The Bringer of Life.
        - Ask students:
            - What did you notice about the tempo? Dynamics?
            - Does it remind you of any specific planet?
            - Why does that tempo or dynamic remind you of that?
        - Lead students to attributes of planets such as cold, hot, big/small (in relation to Earth), rocky, gaseous, fast spinning or slow spinning.
            - Example: Slow spinning could be represented with slow music.
- Divide students into small groups. Assign each group a planet (other than Earth).
- Have each group listen to Gustav Holst's composition on that planet.
    - As they listen, have students record observations about the tempo and dynamics. Students should explain how the tempo and dynamics connect to the attributes of the planet.
    - Students should then imagine that they are composers tasked with writing music to express the attributes of that planet.
        - Students should decide the following:
            - What tempo would it be?
            - What would the dynamics be?
            - What instruments would they use?

Closing/Reflection

- Play a small section of each musical composition. Allow students time to share their observations about the tempo and dynamics and how they see it connecting to the attributes of that planet.

ASSESSMENTS

Formative

- Teachers will observe students':
  - Responses during class discussion
  - Ability to identify attributes of planets
  - Ability to identify the tempo and dynamics in music

Summative

- Students can connect musical concepts like tempo and dynamics to attributes of planets.
- Students can explain the attributes of their assigned planets.
- Students can describe how they would represent their planet using tempo and attributes.

DIFFERENTIATION

Accelerated: Students can create their own musical composition using body percussion (stomping, clapping, snapping, etc.) and/or found sound (using objects around them such as pencils or crumpling paper) for their planet.

Remedial: Create a class key for what a fast or slow tempo or loud or soft dynamics might represent to support students as they analyze music.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CREDITS

U.S. Department of Education- STEM + the Art of Integrated Learning
Ideas contributed by: SAIL Grant Teacher Leaders

**This integrated lesson provides differentiated ideas and activities for educators that are aligned to a sampling of standards. Standards referenced at the time of publishing may differ based on each state's adoption of new standards.*

Revised and copyright: 2025 @ ArtsNOW