

The Sound of Symbols



Theme: Symbols
Concept: Patterns

Grade Level: 2nd – 5th grade
Time needed for lesson: 45 minutes

***Overview:** Students create visual symbols that are used as notations for body percussion.*

Objectives: This lesson is a basic introduction to the principles of rhythm and repetition in music and visual art. The student will create and interpret symbols to compose a visual notation of sounds. Students will be able to see how a simple pattern can become a complex design with rhythm and repetition.

Essential Question: What role do symbols play in visual art and music?

Preparation for lesson: Teacher engages students in a dialog about how symbols are used in all cultures. Use circle, spiral and cross as a vehicle for this dialog. Interweave the symbols of musical notation into this dialog. For example: The symbol for *forte*, *piano* and actual music notes.

Lesson activities:

1. Student volunteer is asked to draw a heavy line on the board. The teacher asks the students if this line should be played loud or soft. Repeat activity with lightly drawn line. This demonstrates the elements of dynamics in music and value in visual art.
2. Ask a student to use body percussion (clap, stamp, snap, etc.) to create rhythm, incorporating dynamics. The teacher listens and observes movement. The student repeats rhythmic activity. The teacher draws simple symbols (light lines, dark lines, dots, geometric shapes etc.), to interpret the rhythm. “What did we do?”
3. Class is divided into pairs. Each pair is given 1 piece of construction paper and pens. Instruct the students to fold paper into quarters.
4. One student is instructed to perform a short and simple rhythm using body percussion. The other student listens and draws the rhythm on the paper square.
5. Students swap activities. This activity is repeated four times. Each student will illustrate rhythms and create rhythms twice.

6. All the students stand and perform one of their rhythms they created and notated simultaneously.

Extension of Lesson: Teacher picks an age appropriate short story from various cultures for students to read and actively search out symbols and symbol patterns.

Materials needed: 3 x 5 cards, markers, examples of symbols in visual art from different cultures, blackboard/whiteboard, cymbals, chalk or soft pencil.

Vocabulary: Symbol, cymbal, geometric shape, pattern, spiral, 2-dimensional, 3-dimensional, composition, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, body percussion, flip & slide, variation, theme, complex, forte, piano

Benchmarks:

Math:

Patterns - The student will use a variety of problem-solving approaches to extend, describe and create patterns using symbols, shapes or designs.

Geometry and Measurement - The student will use geometric properties and relationships to recognize and describe shapes.

- Identify two-dimensional geometric shapes in everyday situations.

Science:

Observe and Measure - Observing is the first action taken by the learner to acquire new information about an object.

Language Arts:

Listening - The student will listen for information and for pleasure.

- Listen critically for information and incorporate the information into other activities.
- Group Interaction - The student will use effective communication strategies in pairs and small group context.
- Visual Literacy: The student will interpret, evaluate and compose visual messages.

Visual Arts:

Language of Visual Art - The student will identify visual art terms: line, shape and symbol.

- Student will use the elements of art (line, color, shape) and principles of art (rhythm and repetition).
- Discuss observations of visual and expressive features seen in the environment (such as colors, textures and shapes).

Music:

Language of Music

- Rhythm (strong and weak beats, steady beats)
- Tempo (fast and slow)

- Dynamics (loud and soft)

Music Expression - Participate in music through using body percussion.

- Play simple rhythmic patterns using sounds and silences

Whole child:

Thinking/Cognition: Students describe, extend and create patterns using symbols.

Feelings/Emotions: Students are excited by the creation of visual symbols, rhythmic compositions and performance.

Doing/Physical: Students use body percussion (clap, stamp, snap, etc.). Students draw symbols.

Creating/Intuition: Students intuit and create visual symbols for musical sounds.

Teacher Assessment

Using a scale of 0 to 5 (5 = very much, 0 = not at all)

- _____ Student successfully created musical and visual patterns.
- _____ Student is able to work collaboratively.
- _____ Student participated in discussion concerning symbols and life.
- _____ There was recognition of interdisciplinary symbols and patterns with this student.

Student Self-assessment

1. I thought that this lesson was very interesting. ____yes
_____maybe ____no
2. I enjoy having a guest artist in our room. ____yes
_____maybe ____no
3. I learned how music and art are alike. ____yes
_____maybe ____no
4. I understand how symbols are used in
 everyday life. ____yes
_____maybe ____no

