

The Minnesota Sinfonia  
Music in the Schools 2019-20 Lesson Plan  
Compare & Contrast Two Musical Selections

Rationale: Compare & Contrast is a powerful teaching strategy that engages students in higher order thinking. Comparing two recordings, or interpretations, of the same musical selection, students must listen carefully for musical qualities such as tempo, dynamics and instrumentation. Learning to listen for these expressive qualities of music helps listeners better enjoy music in a concert setting.

Students in primary grades should compare and contrast two DIFFERENT pieces of music, per the Minnesota Music Standards.

Students in grades 4 and up may compare and contrast two different musical selections or two different performances of the same work.

Objectives:

SWBAT state one to three musical characteristics of a piece of music.

SWBAT compare & contrast two recordings of the same music with at least one statement of similarity and one statement of contrast.

Music Standards (see specific benchmarks for each grade level):

1. Foundations

1. Use foundational knowledge and skills while responding to, creating, and presenting artistic work.

4. Respond – Grade 4 benchmark

7. Analyze and construct interpretations of artistic work.

1. Identify and describe elements that create contrasting *performances* of the same *musical selection*.

5. Connect – Grade 4 benchmark

2. Describe emotions experienced when *performing* or **listening** to a *musical selection* and relate it to a personal experience.

Materials:

A curated list of easily available recordings (YouTube) is included.

Additionally the Sinfonia CD recordings may be used for this lesson.

Procedure:

Whole Class:

1. Explain to the students that the class will be listening to a piece of music and thinking about how the music sounds. Define these musical terms: tempo (speed of the beat), dynamics (loudness or softness of the music), tone color (which instruments are playing / quality of the sounds heard).
2. If you wish, share information about the composer. This is not essential to the listening lesson but can be interesting for students.

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3. Remind students to listen in silence as the music is playing; play the musical selection. If the selection is longer than 3 minutes consider playing only the first 2 – 3 minutes of the music.
4. Think-Pair-Share: students turn to a partner and share their thoughts on the tempo, dynamics and tone color of the music.
5. Share with class: Class generates a list of the characteristics of the music on the board / large paper for all to see. (raising hands, teacher calls on students to share thoughts)
6. Repeat this procedure with the 2<sup>nd</sup> musical selection.
7. Use a Venn Diagram or a Double Bubble Chart to help students visualize Compare & Contrast. Work towards as many statements of difference and similarity as possible. For this lesson, the composer will be the same and the title of the piece will be the same.

Individual/Partners: (Upper grades)

1. Explain to the students that the class will be listening to a piece of music and thinking about how the music sounds. Define these musical terms: tempo (speed of the beat), dynamics (loudness or softness of the music), tone color (which instruments are playing / quality of the sounds heard).
2. If you wish, share information about the composer. This is not essential to the listening lesson but can be interesting for students. Alternatively older students can research composers in another lesson and create a presentation about composers whose music will be heard at the Sinfonia concert.
3. Remind students to listen in silence as the music is playing; play the musical selection  
Students complete the worksheet describing the music, making as many statements as possible. Give examples of how to describe music such as: I hear violins; the tempo is fast; the music begins softly and grows louder; etc
4. Students may also write their response to the music as long as they do not make judgemental statements (e.g. it's boring, I don't like it): the music makes me feel.....; this music reminds me of..... because.....
5. Students share their writing with a partner and complete a Double Bubble Map or Venn Diagram with their partner.
6. Class discussion of the similarities and differences between the two versions of the music. Which version does the class prefer? Why?

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**Listening to Music Worksheet – by** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Student name / date)*

**Definitions:**

Tempo = the speed of the beat

Dynamics = the loudness and softness of the music

Tone Color = the special quality of each instrument or the instruments you hear in the music

Texture = how many instruments are playing at a time and whether the instruments are playing the same melody (unison) or multiple different melodies at the same time (harmony)

The composer of this music is \_\_\_\_\_

The title of this music is \_\_\_\_\_

Some things I hear as I listen to this music are:

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

This music reminds me of

\_\_\_\_\_

The composer tried to remind me of this animal in the music \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of animal)

by using these instruments and sounds

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The tempo of this music is \_\_\_\_\_

The dynamics of this music are \_\_\_\_\_