

The Minnesota Sinfonia  
Music in the Schools 2019-20 Lesson Plan  
Name That Animal - Student Interpretations of a Musical Selection

Grade level: 4 and up

Rationale: While we often know both the composer and the name of the piece before we hear it at a concert, thinking about the composer's intentions and listening for specific features of a musical work can deepen enjoyment. In order to make decisions about an interpretation listeners must consider 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.

Objectives:

SWBAT state the name of an animal they associate with the music.

SWBAT describe the music.

SWBAT use their description of the music to explain how the music reminded them of their chosen animal.

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

7. Analyze and construct interpretations of artistic work.

Grade 4 benchmark:

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

5. Connect

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. Share some biographical information about the composer. Explain that in this music the composer is describing an animal, bird, fish or insect. Our task we be to discover which animal the composer is depicting in the music.
2. 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).
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

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music. If not playing the entire piece, be sure to play the portion with music most descriptive of the animal in the title.

4. Think-Pair-Share: students turn to a partner and share their thoughts on the tempo, dynamics and tone color of the music.
5. LISTEN AGAIN: this time, think about which animal the music might be describing and why.
6. Share with class: Class generates a list of the animals on the board. Be sure to acknowledge that even though the composer named the piece for an animal, there is no wrong answer. Be sure to get all suggestions of animals on the whiteboard. Write characteristics of the music on the board / large paper for all to see. (raising hands, teacher calls on students to share thoughts)
7. Ask students to explain what they heard in the music that reminded them of a particular animal. (for example in Ballet of the Chicks the staccato sounds could remind of a woodpecker pecking at bark as well as chicks pecking at their shells to get out)
8. Reveal the title of the piece. If any students had selected this animal, have them explain how the music reminded them of the animal. Listen a 3<sup>rd</sup> time to the music for the whole class to imagine the animal of the title in the music.

Individual/Partners: (Upper grades/Middle School)

1. Explain to the students that the class will be listening to a piece of music and thinking about how the music describes an animal. 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. Share biographical information about the composer. Try to make some connections between the composer and students today. Most of these selections are still played in concert halls, partly for their depictions of animals. Challenge the students to think about why these pieces have remained popular over time.
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

Students may also write their response to the music as long as they do not make judgmental statements e.g. it's boring, I don't like it): the music makes me feel.....; this music reminds me of..... because.....

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4. Students share their writing with a partner and explain to their partner how the music reminded them of their chosen animal.
  5. Class discussion selected animals and how the music depicts these animals.
  6. Teacher reveals original title of music. Class discussion of how the music does (or does not) fit the animal in the title of the music (as interpreted by the class).
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**Animals in Music – by** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Student name / date)

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

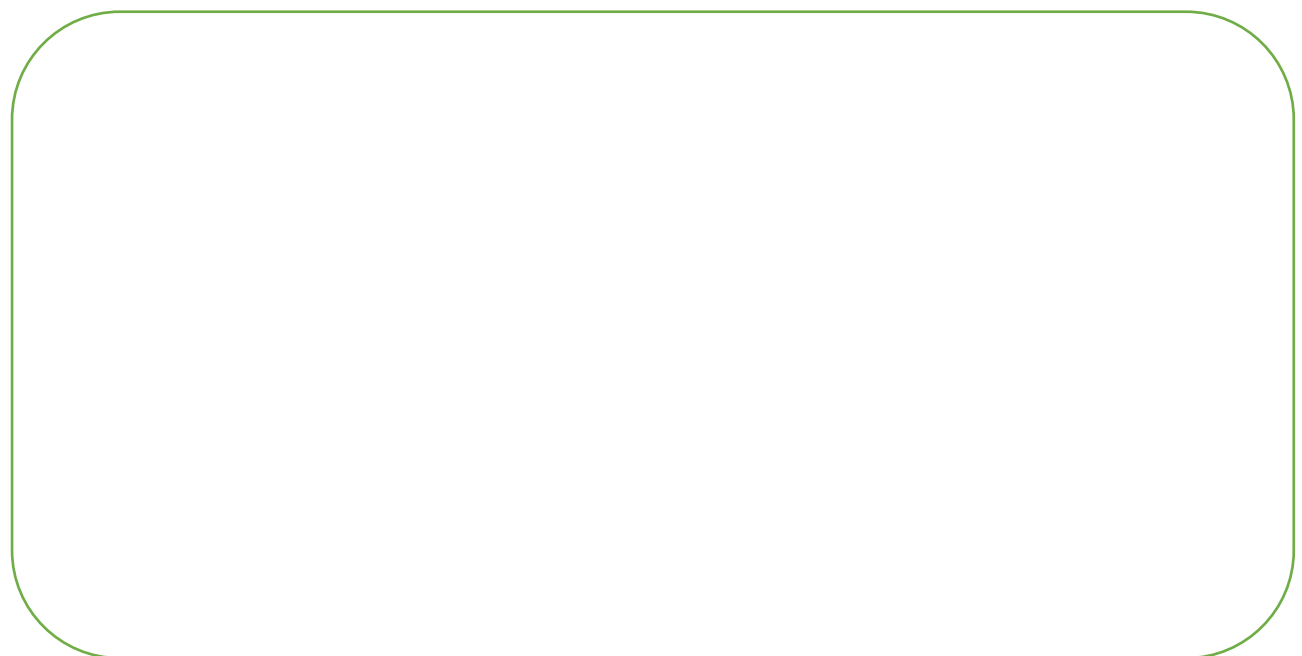
by using these instruments and sounds

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**Here is a drawing of the animal and what they are “doing” in the music:**



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**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 \_\_\_\_\_