

# NYSSMA MUSIC VIEWS

Standards-Based Teaching & Learning Across the State



## Lesson Plan for NYSSMA Music Views

**Name:** Dr. Daniel Deutsch

**Title:** First Steps in Composition

### Level

- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School

### Content Area

- Band
- Chorus
- Classroom
- Orchestra

### Objective

To guide a middle school instrumental lesson group through the first stages of composition and improvisation.

**The NYS Learning Standard(s)** this lesson will address...

- Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts
- Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources
- Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
- Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts

**National Standards for Music Education** this lesson...

- Singing – alone and with others – a varied repertoire of music
- Performing on instruments – alone and with others – a varied repertoire of music
- Improvising melodies, variations and accompaniments
- Composing and arranging music within specific guidelines
- Reading and notating music
- Listening to, analyzing and describing music
- Evaluating music and music performances
- Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
- Understanding music in relation to history and culture

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## Instructional Ideas

Part I: Working with a 5th grade instrumental lesson group, the teacher guides the students through the first steps of composition. The teacher first demonstrates how we can express emotions and ideas musically through our own compositions. Beginning with call and response vocal and instrumental improvisations, the teacher coaches the students in the process of creating their own group composition.

Part II: The teacher uses a "Haunted House" theme to facilitate "free" group improvisation.

Topics covered in lesson:

- Emotion and musical intention in composition
- Improvisational singing and playing in call and response
- Motivic development and transformation
- How to build phrases and create form
- Melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, articulation
- Unity and contrast
- Tension and release
- Editing and revision
- Reflection and discussion

## Assessment

Formative assessment is used to guide the students through the project. Summative reflection provides closure for the lesson.

## References/Resources

- Hickey, M. (ed.) (2003). *Why and How to Teach Music Composition: A New Horizon for Music Education*. Reston, VA: MENC.
- Kaschub, M. and Smith, J. (2009). *Minds on Music: Composition for Creative and Critical Thinking*. Lanham, MD: R&L Education—A Division of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., in partnership with MENC: The National Association for Music Education.
- Wiggins, J. (1990). *Composition in the Classroom*. Reston, VA: MENC.

## Notes

Student solo performances feature their own original compositions.