

Arts in the Curriculum

Music

Lesson Plan Ideas

1. To use music from films to stimulate debate and analysis of literature.

Students will learn to:

- Become more aware of language as a system of communication
 - Music as a language and a powerful tool in supporting a narrative and enhancing emotion
 - Debate on the use of a particular music usage fosters an ability to develop the language to respond to the literature.
- Develop an argument/make a case
 - See above points
- Give a personal response to an idea, experience, or other stimulus
 - See above points
- Work from imagination, memory and direct observation
 - Identifying the links between the music and the literature/film
 - Constructing individual links between other books and music
- Use analysis as a means of communication
 - See above points
- Use an appropriate working vocabulary
 - See above points
- Appraise and evaluate their own work and that of others
 - The homework submissions emanating from the process and presented in class will result in very diverse responses to a piece of literature thus ensuring a debate on many aspects it.

Process:

- Take a piece of music from a film (e.g. Theme from Schindler's List), play it in class and ask the students to articulate their responses to it, what it evokes for them and try to elicit from them what may be the subject matter of the

film.

- Following the contributions from the students, reveal to them what the subject is and discuss why the music may or may not be appropriate.
- Continue in the same vein with another example (e.g. Wagner's 'Ride of the Valkyries'). This piece was chosen as it is less 'clear cut' and has been used in many different contexts in film but generally the theme is of a 'grandiose' nature or accompanying a large orchestrated event.
- Terminology Parallels in the language Music and Literature Analysis:

<i>Music</i>	<i>Literature</i>
Leitmotifs/Motifs	Characters
Tone	Tone
Texture	Density of Language
Movements	Chapters
Themes	Themes
Tempo	Pace

- Following on from this, as homework ask the students to choose music that represents characters/elements/storylines within the course literature, present that in class and allow for responses from other students to each. This presentation could be done in pairs or threes also.

2. To use songs and song writing to help students understand and engage with socio-historical/political issues and appreciate the importance of structure in all forms of writing.

Students will learn to:

- Gain a deep understanding of structure in writing
 - Terminology parallels of song structure and essay structure
 - Introduction/Exposition
 - Themes/ Motifs
 - Chapters/Verses
 - Twist/Bridge
 - Conclusion/Coda

- To contribute to students' awareness of language as a system of communication
 - Language in Songwriting – brief and snappy
 - Music as a language of communication – emotional tool
 - Minor chords – feelings of sadness etc
- Develop skills in analysis of literature and social/world issues
 - Analysis of song lyrics on different topics
- Use analysis as a means of communication
 - Analysis of songs both musically and lyrically
- Sustain a project from conception to realisation
 - Analyse a song on a particular subject matter then use the learned results of that analysis to construct one's own song
- Use an appropriate working vocabulary
 - Through exposure to various songs and practice
- Appraise and evaluate their own work and that of others
 - Listen back to each others' ideas in the class and evaluate
- Develop an awareness and an ability in different forms of writing
 - Song writing requires brevity and cleverness with sentence structure.
 - To say a lot in few words
- Examine how pattern, rhyme and meter effects writing

Process:

- Take a socio-historical/political issue from a particular time period that you are studying, in this case 'The Cold War' and the song 'Ivan Meets G.I. Joe' by The Clash

Ivan Meets G.I. Joe – The Clash

*So you're on the floor, at 54
 Think you can last - at the Palace
 Does your body go to the to and fro?
 But tonight's the night - or didn't you know
 That Ivan meets G.I. Joe*

*He tried his tricks- that Ruskie bear
 The United Nations said it's all fair*

*He did the radiation - the chemical plague
But he could not win - with a cossack spin*

*The Vostok Bomb - the Stalin strike
He tried every move - he tried to hitch hike
He drilled a hole - like a Russian star
He made every move in his repertoire*

When Ivan meet G.I. Joe

*Now it was G.I. Joe's turn to blow
He turned it on - cool and slow
He tried a payphone call to the Pentagon
A radar scan - a leviathan*

*He wiped the Earth - clean as a plate
What does it take to make a Ruskie break?
But the crowd are bored and off they go
Over the road to watch China blow!*

When Ivan meets G.I. Joe

- Along with the obvious discussion of the lyrical content, discuss the musical content and how it reflects the subject matter:
 - Does the song evoke any form of emotion that relates to the issue being explored? How does it do that? (Through rhythm, lyrics, tone, change in pace of the music etc...)
 - Music as the metaphor. Disco music... The metaphor is that they are two guys at studio 54 in 70s NYC, using every trick in the book to win the big dance-off as the crowd observes. The spectators, ultimately bored with all the devastation, leave to watch China develop.
 - Star Wars sound effects.
 - Does the song evoke any form of emotion that relates to the issue being explored? How does it do that? (Through rhythm, lyrics, tone, change in pace of the music etc...)
- Another less figurative and more in tonal-contrast example to the above is Russians by Sting

The Russians - Sting

*In Europe and America, there's a growing feeling of hysteria
Conditioned to respond to all the threats
In the rhetorical speeches of the Soviets
Mr. Krushchev said we will bury you
I don't subscribe to this point of view
It would be such an ignorant thing to do
If the Russians love their children too*

*How can I save my little boy from Oppenheimer's deadly toy
There is no monopoly in common sense
On either side of the political fence
We share the same biology
Regardless of ideology
Believe me when I say to you
I hope the Russians love their children too*

*There is no historical precedent
To put the words in the mouth of the President
There's no such thing as a winnable war
It's a lie that we don't believe anymore
Mr. Reagan says we will protect you
I don't subscribe to this point of view
Believe me when I say to you
I hope the Russians love their children too*

*We share the same biology
Regardless of ideology
What might save us, me, and you
Is that the Russians love their children too*

- Address the structural approach to the songwriting
 - a series of verses with one common phrase in each (e.g. 'Russians love their children too')
 - Musically – textural development around one main theme.
- From the discussed themes, construct a song in the class
- Ask students to write their own lyrics to a song about the same subject with two different approaches (e.g. figurative/metaphorical and direct reference) and present it to the class. They must also choose a musical style and justify that choice based on the nature of those lyrics and how it links to the socio-historical/political issue. Students may do this individually or in groups.

Alternative projects:

- Pick songs from the era being studied and ask students to determine which era the song is from and explain their case
Or
- Pick songs from the era being studied and ask students how they feel this song reflects that era
Or
- Pick a song from the era being studied and ask students to find another contemporary song that they feel raises similar socio-historical issues and explain why

Other areas in which song writing may be utilised as a creative learning activity:

- Geography: Go on a walk around the school grounds or out to a park and explore the geography of the area. Ask students to write a song that describes the landscape of the area
- English: Ask students to find a song that speaks to a similar 'issue', 'theme', 'relationship', or 'conflict/tension' that arises in required reading
- History: To review for exams, ask students to write a song that speaks to the social, political and economic history of a particular time period, such as WW2
- Foreign Language subject: Employ a similar technique by having students write a song in a foreign language. Use the music of a published song as a starting point

Year Group	Curriculum Subject	Specific Links
Junior Cycle		
	Art, Craft and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give a personal response to an idea, experience or other stimulus • work from imagination, memory and direct observation • use an appropriate working vocabulary • develop an awareness of the historical, social and economic role and value of art, craft and design and aspects of contemporary culture and mass-media
	English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to read and listen to accounts of other students' experiences and to respond positively and creatively to them • in speaking to and writing for a variety of audiences such as peers, class groups, school, outsiders, parents, the public and teachers • in using the following language functions for a real purpose :recording, reporting, persuading, arguing, organising, classifying, theorising, documenting, note-taking and letter-writing • listening skills such as remembering significant details, recalling sequences of words, ideas and events, seeking information, looking for evidence, and sensitivity to tone, irony and suggestion should be developed • to become aware of his/her own sensuous, imagistic, affective and intellectual responses • to become aware of the pattern of words, forms, sounds and images which occasioned these responses • to re-read, review and reflect as necessary disciplines • to interpret orally and attempt performances and productions • to develop a critical consciousness with respect to all language use • to focus on the choice of words and the reasons for a particular choice of words in any medium • to become aware of the concept of style and the effects of different styles
	History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should acquire information and develop understanding of the principal trends, issues and events of the History course studied and the way in which individuals and institutions influence and are influenced by the sequence of events in time, how the contemporary world has been shaped by the interaction of people and events in the past, the nature and use of historical sources

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Synthesise</u>, e.g. assemble in logical sequence, follow a line of argument, offer explanations • Present and communicate in a variety of ways, e.g. written, graphic and oral students should therefore develop the disposition • To ensure that historical narrative is consistent with the evidence while recognising that the available evidence may be open to more than one valid interpretation • To recognise that historical knowledge is tentative and incomplete and therefore subject to revision or reinterpretation in the light of new evidence and/or insights.
	Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop aural perception in its broadest sense and to foster an awareness and an appreciation of the music of the past and of the present, and of its role in our own as well as other environments.
	SPHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to promote self-esteem and self-confidence through presentation • to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion
Senior Cycle		
	History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a range of research skills essential for the study of history • Develop an appreciation of the nature and variety of historical evidence • Develop the ability to think critically
	English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A respect and appreciation for language used accurately and appropriately and a competence in a wide range of language skills both oral and written • the ability to think, reason, discriminate and evaluate in a wide variety of linguistic contexts, personal, social, vocational and cultural. In comprehending, students should be able to analyze, infer, synthesise and evaluate; in composing, students should be able to research, plan, draft, re-draft, and edit • knowledge about the nature and uses of language and the variety of functions and genres in which it operates • interpreting and controlling the textual features (grammar, syntax, spellings, paragraphing) of written and oral language to express and communicate • the development of interest and enjoyment in using language, a respect for its potential to make meaning and an appreciation of its diverse cultural manifestations.

