

Genre Mini Unit: Poetry & Song Writing
By Rebecca Johnson

Expected Outcome
Students will integrate their prior knowledge of poetry and Utah history in order to create a song. <i>This is a fun culminating unit of study that should be done toward the end of the year and after students have written several types of poetry.</i>
4 th Grade Language Arts Standards & Objectives
<p>Standard 7: Comprehension: Students understand, interpret, and analyze narrative and informational grade level text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 3: Recognize and use features of narrative and information text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Identify different genres: fairy tales, poems, realistic fiction, fantasy, fables, folk tales, tall tales, biographies, historical fiction. d. Identify different structures in text (e.g., description, problem/solution, compare/contrast, cause/effect). e. Locate facts from a variety of information texts (e.g., newspapers, magazines, textbooks, biographies, other resources). <p>Standard 8: Writing: Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas. • Objective 2: Compose a written draft. • Objective 3: Revise by elaborating and clarifying a written draft. • Object 4: Edit written draft for conventions. • Objective 6: Write in different forms and genres.
Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Overhead with lyrics and music or CD to three songs of your choice • Pre-selected student example of a poem that has potential of becoming a song • Overhead for brainstorming: People, Places, Things, Events • Overhead blank pages and marker • *A song that does not follow the rhyming pattern • Utah history books • *A poem/song about Utah that you have begun writing • Computer with microphone and song recording abilities (for publishing) • Several CD covers from home for sharing ideas • **CD template for publishing <p>*Examples are provided within the individual mini-lessons. **Template is provided on the last page of this document</p>

Week 1, Day 1

Mini-Lesson: Immerse students in a variety of songs/poetry, showing the rhyming patterns and rhythms of each.

- Sing three songs of your choice (e.g., “America the Beautiful” by Kathrine Lee Bates, “Utah! This is the Place” by Sam and Gary Francis, and “Idaho Gold Diggers” by Mrs. Johnson’s fourth grade class). After singing each one, place the lyrics on the overhead and talk about the rhyming and rhythm patterns of each.
- Say, “As writers, we look for patterns and form in songs as they relate to poetry. We also look at the composer’s reason for writing these particular lyrics.”
- *Remind students that they have already written several poems that could have potential of becoming songs.* Show a pre-selected student example on the overhead and model its potential for “songhood”, using a familiar tune.
- Encourage students to record the lyrics to a song they know in their notebooks. Have them look for rhyming and rhythmic patterns. Before students begin their independent writing, ask them to, “Tell me a song that you could sing almost by heart.”

Accountability/Assessment: As you conference with students, look at the poetry they have written. Ask, “Can you see this poem or that poem having potential of becoming a song someday?” Help students see that their potential as a writer goes beyond written or spoken word.

Authors Chair: Have someone share a poem to the tune of a familiar song.

Week 1, Day 2

Mini-Lesson: Brainstorm a list of ideas for possible song lyrics.

- Say, “Just as authors of stories and poems write with a purpose, composers of song lyrics write with a purpose.” Explain to the students that we will be writing a song, and our purpose is to inform our listeners about Utah.
- Explain, “When authors, poets, and composers decide on a topic, it is usually one that they are curious or passionate about. What people, places, things, or events have we studied this year in Utah history that you are already curious or passionate about?” Record student responses on the overhead:

People famous/ordinary	Places close/far, famous/ordinary	Things famous/ordinary concrete/abstract	Events past/present famous/ordinary
Governor Leavitt Brigham Young Ute Indians	Arches National Park The Capital Mesa Verde My Home	Sports teams Wildlife Things to do	2002 Olympics The Discovery

- Remind students that they will be writing a song. Review the familiar songs they named yesterday. Explain that they can compose a new melody, or they may want to use the rhythm of a familiar song and write new lyrics to the music of that particular song.

Accountability/Assessment: As you conference with students, ask what topic they are going to be writing lyrics about and if they already have a song tune in mind. If students have a hard time coming up with something, they may want to turn to their textbook for more ideas.

Authors Chair: Have students share their topic choice with the class and why they chose that particular topic.

Week 1, Day 3

Mini-Lesson: List supporting ideas and begin a draft for song lyrics.

- Say, “Yesterday we reviewed the history of our state by brainstorming ideas for our songs. Today we are going to try writing that history down in lyrics.”
- Using an overhead projector, write and think aloud. Choose a topic from yesterday’s generated list. Think aloud, “I will write down all of the information I can think of that relates to the entire state of Utah. I chose this topic because of a song I am familiar with already (L-O-V-E) and because I have more freedom with my word choice. I am going to look in my history book for further information. Then, as I write my rhyming lyrics, I will have a word bank to choose from.”
- Explain that lyrics to songs do not always have to rhyme. Show a written example (e.g. “The Melody Within” by Michael McLean). Say, “You just have to have the same rhythm or syllable pattern per line.” Choose a rhyming pattern or

Supporting Ideas for:
“U-T-A-H”

Utah	Red Rock
Sand dunes	Family
Lake Powell	Temple Square
1847	Brigham Young
Great Salt Lake	
Utes....etc.	

rhythm, and model how to write lyrics on the overhead projector. Have the students help and share the pen. Think aloud: Explain why you choose the words you use. An example is as follows:

Accountability/Assessment: As students leave for independent practice, say, “Today I want to see your topic and supporting ideas woven into a potential song.” As you conference with students, look for things they are doing well and encourage them to write at least something down even if it’s not their favorite idea.

<p>“U-T-A-H”</p> <p>U is for the Utes who lived right here. T is for that famous ‘47 year. A there is no greater state around. H you’ll find a it’s a hidden playground.</p> <p>Utah is famous for its red rock cliffs. The Salt Lake Temple you cannot miss. Etc...</p>

Authors Chair: Have one student share his or her supporting list of ideas. Have another student share his or her “seeds for a song”. Have another student share the tune to his or her song.

Week 1, Day 4

Mini-Lesson: Students will work as pairs to revise, elaborate, and clarify their poems/songs.

- Read through the lyrics of your draft from yesterday. Think aloud, “I really like this part or that part; however, hmm...this line doesn’t send the message to the audience I had in mind. I want this to be a song that shows my gratitude for my state. I need to clarify this by changing this line or that. Also this line does not match the phrasing from the above line.”
- Have the students work in pairs to help you come up with different word choice. Give them 3-4 minutes to talk about it. Get back together and take ideas as they come. Implement ideas as desired, explaining why you choose certain ideas given.

Accountability/Assessment: Send students back to their seats in the same pairs they worked in during mini-lesson time. Conference with students in their pairs, and ask them something they thought needed some revision. Have them share with you what and why they chose to revise certain parts. If they love their song just they way they have it, ask questions about it to get them thinking about what message they want to send. Help them think about the meaning behind the lyrics.

Authors Chair: Have one pair of students share their revisions and how why they decided to revise. If some students are struggling with certain tasks, have them share and get ideas from others in the class.

Week 1, Day 5

Mini-Lesson: Students will edit songs and begin designing their CD covers.

- Display a transparency of your song on the overhead. Make sure the copy contains several mistakes, including but not limited to: capitalization, commas, apostrophes, and line phrasing.
- Encourage the students to discuss in pairs what editing mistakes have been made. Then have students share their ideas with the whole class. Be sure you explain line phrasing as a way to keep the rhythm of the song. Correct the mistakes together using correct marks.
- Tell students they are going to design their own CD cover after they finish editing their lyrics. Show students several examples of CD covers. Display them where students can refer to them when they are finished editing.
- Allow students to edit their songs individually or as pairs.

Accountability/Assessment: As you conference with students, check to see if they edit their phrasing, capitalization, and punctuation correctly. Remind them that the editing they are doing today will help them on everyday tasks in the future. Also comment on their drawings and cover designs as they relate to their song title.

Authors Chair: Have several students share one or two mistakes they corrected. Ask, “How will this editing experience help you in future writing assignments?”

Week 2, Day 1-2

Mini-Lesson: Publish. Students will record their songs onto a computer, using a mike. Show how adding music to our poems brings more meaning.

- Read the song lyrics from the first day. Then play them on a CD player with music. Have students describe the feelings they felt as the music was being played. Ask, “How did your attention change when the music began playing from when I simply read the poems?”
- Explain that they will add meaning and depth to their poems today by singing them into a microphone. We will be recording these songs for a class CD.

- Students will continue to work on their CD covers as they listen to each other's songs. Remind them that they need to write the lyrics to their song on their cover.

Accountability/Assessment: Encourage students to finish their CD covers. Conference with students as they perform their lyrics in front of the class. This may take two days to wrap-up.

Authors Chair: All students will perform as they record their songs. Ask students to applaud at the end of each song. *Make a CD for each class member to take home as an "end-of-the year" gift.

