



Mood Music

How Does Music Evoke Emotion?

Suggested Grades: 6-8

Selena Ryan

National Core Arts Standards

#8 – Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Objectives:

- Discuss elements of music that evoke specific emotions
- Compare and contrast different musical selections.

Materials:

- Worksheet



SELENA RYAN

I am an Arizona-based composer, music educator, and performer. I specialize in contemporary performance and composition, and challenge the many ways to play, interpret, and create music. I work as a K-6 music and choir and band teacher, and freelance as a composer and performer. As an educator, I am devoted to promoting diversity and equity while providing accessibility through social-emotional learning in my classroom!

Suggested Teaching Process:

1. Lead a discussion about different moods.
 - What does it mean to feel something?
 - What sounds, actions, or items do you associate with that mood?
 - Composers write music to create a specific mood, especially in film scores.
2. Play a [creaking door sound](#) for the class.
 - Ask the students, “why is it so *unsettling*?”
 - Discuss the imagery it conjures, the mood it creates, and why the sound is so scary.
 - Then the creaking sound is longer, which makes you unsure of when the sound will end and can make you anticipate something terrible.
 - The sound reminds them of an older building, which can be creepy as well.
 - Open a classroom door.
 - Ask students, “why does that sound not scare them?”
3. Play different examples of film, classical, or pop music.
4. Students write their observations on the attached template. If time permits, students can trade papers or get into groups to compare their answers with their classmates' answers.
5. Conclude the lesson by discussing music and sound can instantly affect and change our perception or interpretation of a situation.

The first time I did this lesson, I was amazed at how many observations my students made based on a 20-second sound effect! Reassure students there is no “right” way to interpret a sound. Composers create sound effects with an idea in mind, it does not mean a different interpretation is wrong.

Extension:

Consider playing different sound effects to elicit more discussion from students. One of my favorite resources is the [Nosferatu Sound Effects Channel](#); another excellent resource is [How Music Affects Film #17: The Lion King](#).





Resources:

Son, L. (2017, April 12). *How music affects film #17: The lion king*. YouTube. Retrieved November 21, 2021, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecYgqLml89c>.

Sound Effects, N. (2015, January 2). *Horror Sound Effect - Creaking Door Open*. YouTube. Retrieved November 21, 2021, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BXEbdUrsDQ>.

Sound Effects, N. (2015, January 2). *Horror sound effect - creaking door open*. YouTube. Retrieved November 21, 2021, from <https://www.youtube.com/c/NosferatuSoundEffects/about>.





NAME: _____

Date: _____

What are feelings?

What sounds, items, or actions, do associate with the following moods?

Happiness: _____

Sadness: _____

Anger: _____

Fear: _____

How does this sound effect make you feel? _____

Why? _____

What *mood* is being represented?

Example #1: _____

Example #2: _____

Example #3: _____

