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# The Music Study Approach

The study of music will be conducted in much the same way as the study of artists. While a bulletin board filled with images may not be necessary, it would be helpful to post a picture of the composer being studied. On the other hand, it will be important to include music selections from your chosen composer and play them during the week as often as you can for each week devoted to the study of your composer.

## General Approach to a Music Study

1. Choose a composer and then 5-8 selections of their music.
2. Find a biography of your composer by either choosing a children's book, a chapter from a book of composer biographies or printed pages from an online source.
3. Find your chosen music selections from either a CD, online source or other electronic device and have them organized for easy play retrieval.
4. Post the picture of your composer and read the biography. For older students, you may wish to include some notes about the musical period for which your composer is categorized (Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Modern).
5. After your introductory lesson, listen to one music selection. Children should remain quiet during this time, but, if it helps, could be doing something relatively noiseless with their hands (knitting, drawing, building with LEGO, etc.). Be sure to keep the selections time length appropriate for the ages of the children. Let each child share their thoughts about the piece. You might even wish to have them draw whatever the music inspires in them while listening. Afterwards, share the drawings and discuss them.
6. Each additional lesson will focus on a new music selection. Always allow a few minutes to discuss the piece before moving on to something else.

7. When all of the selections have been heard, you may wish to have your students choose their favorite. If you'd like to have them complete a notebook page, such as the one used for the artist study, this is the time to complete this. The notebook page allows your students to review the main biographical points of the composer, review all of the pieces covered, share their thoughts and ideas about their favorite piece and even could share one they did not like, always including how they've arrived at their thoughts and opinions. The notebook page should not feel restrictive but can include required components. For example, you may have the page require some basic biographical information about the composer, a list of the music selections you studied and then from this point on give the child the freedom to share their own connections to the composer and the music.

8. A narration can be written for a composer's piece of music; it would be similar to the art study narration but with obvious adaptations.

# Music Study Narrations

## Level 1

The Music Study Narrations are completed as one individual music piece at a time has been heard and after the introduction of the composer or type of music has been introduced, including having read the biography. Please see the teaching notes for the music study approach for the latter activities.

### Study of Each Individual Piece

1. Have your student listen to the music selection, quietly and independently.
2. After listening to it, have your student describe the piece, either orally or through a creative form, such as through drawing, painting or sculpting. Let your student give the narration to you privately to keep siblings and friends from influencing her own thoughts and perspectives. Jot down some of her thoughts or points in a quick list as she narrates, if you'd like. You can share these notes later in a final narration, if needed.
3. Following this description, listen to the selection together again and discuss any details missed. If you have more than one student participating in this study, you will come together as a group for this discussion. Share with your group the points which the students had in common about the pieces and offer at least one unique perspective for each student as well. You may also wish to allow the students to share individually, but this sometimes gets repetitive and offers the risk of influencing their own thoughts. Additionally, use your notes taken from any instructional commentary about the specific piece and incorporate whichever you feel best augments the discussion, if you wish. Often this will act as a substitute for a larger group then is available, giving a few more perspectives or particulars about the pieces to include.

# Level 2

The Music Study Narrations are completed as one individual music piece at a time has been heard and after the introduction of the composer or type of music has been introduced, including having read the biography. Please see the teaching notes for the music study approach for the latter activities.

## Study of Each Individual Piece

1. Have your student listen to the music selection, quietly and independently.
2. After listening to it, have your student describe the piece, either orally or through a creative form, such as through drawing, painting or sculpting. Let your student give his narration to you privately to keep siblings and friends from influencing his own thoughts and perspectives. Jot down some of his thoughts or points in a quick list as he narrates, if you'd like. You can share these notes later in a final narration, if needed.
3. Following this description, listen to the selection together again to discuss any details missed. See Level One for additional notes.
4. Have your student write his narration.

What might be included, depending on age and writing level, in the narration:

- Name and date of selection and by whom
- Background information about the composer or type of music
- Detailed description of the selection
- Personal thoughts about the selection

## Scaffolding the Music Study Narrations

- The student who needs more assistance as he moves from Level One to Level Two might refer to the notes taken by the teacher during his oral narration to use as a guide for his written narration, after first looking them over and seeking to organize the sentences.
- A student transitioning to Level Two might also use the same story paper used in Art Study Narrations. This paper has the top half of the page blank and the bottom half is lined. Allow your student to draw a picture of what he imagines as he listens to the piece and use the bottom half for a written inclusion of basic information such as name of composer or music type, dates or musical eras and any additional pertinent facts. The picture can be a substitute for the student's thoughts and feelings about the pieces as this will be a reflection of them but in a different form. Encourage your student to discuss their picture with the teacher, a friend or family member. Also, the picture can also be a series of smaller pictures or set up in comic book style, if your student wishes to convey a story or series of events.
- When ready, remove the story book paper and have your student begin to add his thoughts and feelings in written rather than picture form. Of course, if your student enjoys this format, then he may wish to switch between both styles.
- He can make his sketch on a separate sheet of paper or in his sketch book and use a fully lined page for a narration which includes all of the previous years' information and then add background information about the composer or music type when ready.
- Each year you would increase the level of detail and expectations in writing.

# Level 3

The Music Study Narrations are completed as one individual music piece at a time has been heard and after the introduction of the composer or type of music has been introduced, including having read the biography. Please see the teaching notes for the music study approach for the latter activities.

## Study of Each Individual Piece

1. Have your student listen to the music selection, quietly and independently.
2. After listening to it, have your student describe the piece, either orally or through a creative form, such as through drawing, painting or sculpting. Let your student give the narration to you privately to keep siblings and friends from influencing her own thoughts and perspectives. Jot down some of her thoughts or points in a quick list as she narrates, if you'd like. You can share these notes later in a final narration, if needed.
3. Following this description, listen to the selection together again to discuss any details missed. See Level One for additional notes.
4. Have your student write her narration. You can vary how much detail and with what you would like the narration to include.

## A Basic Narration Might Include:

- Name and date of selection and by whom
- Background information about the composer or type of music
- Very detailed description of the piece
- Personal comments or reflections of the student about the selection
- Perhaps some connections between previously heard selections by this composer or between previously heard composers of this musical time period.