

PROJECT IDEA STARTER

Music

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From listening to the radio and watching TV to finding songs online and even singing, music is a part of most people's lives. Remember the

ABC song? Every child, it seems, sings nursery rhymes and uses songs to learn. Songs are often passed down from generation to generation, keeping family traditions—and history—very much alive.

When did humankind first make music? Cave drawings from thousands of years ago include evidence of music. Early on, humans used bones and animal skins as instruments. The first drums were made from animal hides stretched over frames made of branches. The history of wind instruments can be traced to ancient Egypt and Western Asia. Archaeologists have found evidence of flutes made of bones with drilled holes. Music continued to evolve as lyres, harps, and didgeridoos were developed. Music has been and remains an important part of human cultures.

A standard way of writing music was created by the Greeks. The modern system used today was developed in the Middle Ages. Those important developments allowed composers to contribute and distribute their ideas. Although composed hundreds of years ago, the works of Johann Sebastian Bach and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, for example, are still performed and studied today. Another good example is the work of John Philip Sousa, whose military style marches from the late 1800s and early 1900s



remain popular today. The style of Leonard Bernstein, who composed during the middle of the twentieth century, can be found in many of today's popular Broadway musicals.

Other cultures have their own musical traditions. Clearly, music is appreciated by people all over the world. It also transfers easily within and between cultures. For example, drumming is sometimes used as a language to communicate syllables. The concept is similar to **sofège**, a set of corresponding syllables and notes used by all types of musicians. If you know the song *Do-Re-Mi* from *The Sound of Music*, you already know the names of the sofège syllables.

Musical instruments are typically categorized into four main classes: **woodwinds**, **brass**, **percussion**, and **strings**.

- Woodwinds make sounds by blowing air against a sharp edge. Notes are made by opening and closing holes on the instrument. All woodwind instruments, except the flute, contain a reed or double reed, a thin piece of carved wood that helps produce the sound.

PLAN YOUR PROJECT

Use this idea starter AND publication 4-H 365 *Self-Determined Project Guide* as the starting place for your 4-H self-determined project. The *Self-Determined Project Guide* is available from your county OSU Extension office or on the Web at ohio4h.org/selfdetermined. You may choose to do a little or a lot depending on your level of interest. Be sure to register your project with your county OSU Extension office.

- Brass instruments use lip vibrations, but instead of a reed, contain a mouthpiece.

Unlike woodwinds and brass, percussion and strings do not involve using air to support the sound.

- Percussion instruments are struck with either a mallet or hand to create resonance, and can be unpitched or pitched. Unpitched percussion instruments include the snare drum, cymbals, and maracas. Pitched percussion instruments include the xylophone, chimes, and timpani.
- String instruments, like violins and guitars, make sound through the vibration of strings. They are played by drawing a bow across the strings or by using one's fingers to pluck the strings.

Another way of performing music is vocally, by one or more singers. The human voice is a unique instrument because no two voices are exactly the same. Vocalists are typically categorized into four voice parts: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. The voices at the higher range are soprano and tenor. Lower range voices identify as alto and bass. Vocal music is likely even older than instrumental music.

Everyone can enjoy and appreciate music. From classical music and choral pieces to military marches and pop, music offers something for everyone. Use the ideas below to explore what you enjoy most and appreciate about music. No matter what you decide to do, share what you discover with your project helper or with your club.

AREAS OF INTEREST AND THINGS TO DO

Every self-determined 4-H project can be broken down into areas of interest. These are the specific areas members want to address during their project adventures. Using *4-H 365 Self-Determined Project Guide*, identify at least three areas of interest with at least three activities per area to explore. Take your ideas from the list below or make up your own.

The History of Music

- ☐ Research two famous instrumentalists. Louis Armstrong, Yo Yo Ma, Andre Watts, and the Imani Winds are good examples.
- ☐ Listen to a music genre that is unfamiliar to you, such as jazz, blues, or classical. What is the history of this culture or style? What was your first reaction after listening to the music?
- ☐ Explore one composer. Do the pieces have a common theme?
- ☐ Research two modern-day composers and find out what composers influenced them.

- ☐ Research the ways historical events influenced music from 1900 through 1970.
- ☐ Talk to a parent, grandparent, or older relative about their three favorite songs from childhood. What do they like about them? Were they popular songs? Do they have personal meaning for them?
- ☐ What are a few eras of music? Some examples are Renaissance, Baroque, and Romantic. Compare and contrast to today's music.

Instruments

- ☐ Build your own instrument. Describe how it works and what it can be used for.
- ☐ Make a reference poster or pamphlet that describes the instruments in one of the instrument classes: strings, woodwinds, brass, or percussion.
- ☐ Learn an instrument and perform a short piece of music.
- ☐ Compare and contrast the instruments within one of the instrument classes.



- ❑ Research instruments that are particular to different cultures or regions of the world.
- ❑ What is your favorite instrument? Research a musician who played or plays it.

Community

- ❑ Attend a concert in your community and write a review. To publish it, send it to a local newspaper or post it online.
- ❑ Go to your local music store and look at the different instruments and music.
- ❑ Talk to a music teacher at a local school about his or her career path.
- ❑ Take a sample piano, voice, or instrumental lesson.
- ❑ Volunteer at a local day care or retirement center during a music activity. Better yet, see if you can design and deliver a musical activity of your own.
- ❑ Sing in a choir or play in a band. School or community choirs and bands are good places to start.

Attributes

- ❑ Look at a piece of sheet music and identify these elements: time signature, types of notes, types of rests, and accidentals.
- ❑ Listen to a few children's song such as *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*. Notice the repetition of pitches.
- ❑ Research how music has been or can be used as a way to communicate.
- ❑ Learn a children's song using sign language.
- ❑ Identify and define five musical terms such as accent, concerto, diminuendo, and forte. What is one more?
- ❑ Compose your own song and, if you wish, include lyrics.

Musical Influences in Your Life

- ❑ Create and share a list of songs that reflect different moods, such as happy, sad, etc.
- ❑ Create and share a list of songs that are popular for exercising.
- ❑ Create and share a list of songs that are especially relaxing.

- ❑ How is music used in movies? Give some examples and discuss whether they are used effectively.
- ❑ Name at list two music jingles used in advertising. Is music a good way to advertise?
- ❑ Write the lyrics of two songs that help in memorizing facts, such as state names, multiplication facts, or spelling difficult words.

RELATED RESOURCES

Want to know more about how music in Western culture came about? Here's a short, helpful article: method-behind-the-music.com/history/history

