



**Introduction to Music Unit for grades K–4  
for “The Happy Farmer” by Robert Schumann  
Dr. Kay Edwards, Miami University**

**Unit Length**

There are 3 lessons in this unit for grades K–4. Lesson plans are designed for class periods of approximately 35–40 minutes. Teachers will need to adapt the lesson plans to fit their instructional time, school resources, and the individual needs of their students.

**Lesson Use**

These 3 lessons are designed for general music teachers to use, however, portions of the lessons can be used by classroom teachers or homeschool teachers with a limited music background. The 3 lessons are flexible in that they do not have to be done in order, however, within each lesson plan the steps in the process *are* sequential.

**Standards**

**National Core Arts Standards for Music** (2014) are indicated on each lesson. The 3 lessons combined address all 4 of the Artistic Processes (Creating; Performing; Responding; Connecting). [Note: These processes and standards were developed in conjunction with the National Association for Music Education (NAfME).]

The Ohio 2012 Standards for Music (all 6 Progress Points) are indicated on each lesson also. The 3 lessons combined address all 6 Progress Points from the new 2012 Ohio Standards.

- A. Demonstrate how musical elements communicate meaning and emotion by playing, singing or moving to music.
- B. Recognize the use of music for various purposes by performers and listeners in a variety of cultures.
- C. Create music in simple forms to be performed with dance, drama or in response to a work of visual art.
- D. Individually and collaboratively select ideas and a media form of the day to create musical pieces.
- E. Use digital technology to listen to and study music recognizing instruments, voices, ensembles and musical forms.
- F. Form and express opinions about music they hear in formal and informal live and recorded performances.

Music teachers in other states can easily match their standards to those in this Unit.

**Critical Thinking and Common Core Connections**

The lessons provide observable, measurable verbs from Bloom’s Taxonomy of thinking skills. It is usually left up to the teacher to assess these skills in an age–appropriate and practical way suiting the class, in addition to the assessment suggestions in the lesson plans.

“Common Core” connections to **language arts** are included with each lesson plan. It is recommended that the music teacher utilize a **Word Wall** for music vocabulary as one means of application and connection to oral (spoken) and written language skills. Developing and maintaining a **Word Wall** in the classroom is a helpful way to build vocabulary and literacy while also making connections between the music, other subjects, and life experience.



### **Other Connections and Differentiation of Instruction**

Connections to other subject areas are paired with a variety of creative hands-on, tactile, and kinesthetic experiences as students develop a wide range of concepts and skills. In addition to language arts, subjects such as science (farming) and creative movement or dance are incorporated into this set of lessons. The set of three lessons were constructed to provide instruction for the three major types of learners, identified by learning theorists Barbe and Swassing: (1) visual, (2) aural/oral, and (3) tactile/kinesthetic learners.

Through active engagement with the music, most of the students will have opportunities to explore “body, mind, and ‘heart’” – the emotion of music and a way of expressing its elements.

### **Other Learning Theorist Influences for this Collection**

Harvard researcher Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences identifies music as a distinctly separate type of intelligence all learners are likely to have or utilize in learning and suggests that, among the multiple intelligences, music may be the first to emerge in an individual.

The activities in this set of lessons also address the three domains of learning identified by Benjamin Bloom: (1) cognitive, (2) affective (expressing emotion and feeling), and (3) psychomotor. Certainly, the technique of active, experiential learning is one described as most meaningful by a majority of effective practitioners and researchers alike.

The work of Jean Piaget identifies developmental stages of young children: sensorimotor (birth–2 years old); preoperational (2–7 years old); concrete operational (7–11 years); formal operational (11–14 years). Of these, the preoperational and concrete operational stages are the children for whom this collection is most developmentally appropriate (Kindergarten through 6th grade). In these stages, children learn to use language to construct learning, and learn best from concrete objects; listening, in this case, should be paired with concrete experiences through playing instruments, moving, analyzing and describing, creating of some kind (improvising, arranging, or composing), and relating the learning thematically to other subject areas.

Lev Vygotsky’s theory about the interaction of a learner with others and the concept of scaffolding new learning upon previous experience is another social learning model influence for this collection, as is the work of Mildred Parten, who in the 1920s identified a hierarchical types of social play in young children that is viable to this day. The spirit of the work of Maria Montessori reminds us to allow young children to explore independently with guidance from the teacher, who is more of a facilitator to help the individual child be a self-directed learner.

Jerome Bruner, credited with the idea of a *spiral curriculum* in which concepts and skills are revisited in successive years, is highly influential in the lesson guides, which return to the same musical elements but in more sophisticated ways. His stages of sequential learning labeled as enactive (using physical action), iconic (using pictures as representation), and symbolic (using symbols, as with standard music notation) provided a model for applying Bruner’s principles to music instruction.



### Overview

Conceptual Learning and Objectives/Outcomes (student learning outcomes or behavioral objectives) are indicated on each lesson. Over the 3 lessons, the Concept Areas of Rhythm (Steady Beat) and Form are used. Skills developed over the 3 lessons are Moving, Listening, Analyzing, Performing, Creating, and Relating music to other subject areas such as farming, patterns/structure, and dramatizing.

### The lessons for Schumann's "The Happy Farmer" for grades K–4 are:

- Lesson #1: Figuring out the Form
- Lesson #2: Moving to the Steady Beat and Form
- Lesson #3: Tapping and "Reading" the Steady Beat

The length of the *Classics for Kids, Vol. 2* recording for this work is 50 seconds.

### Prior Knowledge

It is helpful for students to have had prior experience moving to different kinds of music while using their gross and fine motor skills; looking and listening for patterns of sound; listening to and dramatizing a story; following icons or pictures of sound while hearing it; and playing instruments.

### Other prior knowledge could include:

- experience with patterns of all kinds
- knowing what an ostinato is (a repeated pattern)

### Materials and Equipment

Each lesson indicates the required materials and equipment. Whenever playing a recording, it is important to have a high-quality sound system and use a high-quality recording. The **Classics for Kids CD** or website with free Naxos audio files are very helpful in this regard, but your playback equipment is equally important. It should be better than that from a typical computer's speakers.

*Special Note:* Any indications for the recording time (minutes:seconds) may vary slightly on different playback systems.

In the event that iPads are available for all students to use: The Tapping page for this selection would be particularly effective on iPads, allowing the students tactile learning as they tap along to the steady beat of "The Happy Farmer" using the page. If you have tried this with your class, please let us know if it "value-added" to the listening experience.

### Instructional Plans (Lesson Plans)

Each lesson plan has been designed specifically for the grade K-4 age group, although music teachers may have to adapt portions of each plan. All of the types of activities in the plans have been "teacher-tested" (or are currently being tested) and are easy-to-follow, set up in a format similar to many music series textbooks. Step-by-step guidelines are given under the "Sequence" portion of each lesson. Bear in mind that some external website resources may change periodically.



### **Supplementary Materials**

Some lessons include various custom tailored music teacher resources. By clicking on the highlighted, underlined link at that point of the lesson plan, you can read the handout with Adobe Acrobat Reader and print it out for use in your classroom. You may wish to project the image from your computer, make an overhead transparency, PowerPoint or SmartBoard slide, in addition making to student copies of some items.

In several lessons, video clips from youtube.com are incorporated. Please remember that sometimes videos are taken down or the link has been changed. Always secure any necessary permission from your principal about the use of www.youtube clips used in this unit; preview the video and cue it up after any advertisements; project the video on the screen in a way that precludes viewing any posted comments below the frame from anyone who has viewed it. Sometimes websites may no longer be available or may have been moved at some point.

There are other activities and materials to this symphonic work that can be found on the [Classics for Kids website](#) under the [“Past Shows” tab](#).

### **Assessment/Evaluation**

The assessments for these 3 lessons are address targeted student instructional outcomes using simple rubrics. “I can...” or “I learned that music can...” statements are provided within each lesson. Strategies for summative and formative assessment are given, such as rubrics and Exit Slips.

Teachers may find it helpful to collect assessment data on individual students over *longer periods of time*, assessing perhaps 5–8 students during each class, or whatever is practical, to maximize instructional time for children and to, of course, be actively involved in their own learning. Teachers may also further develop the assessment strategies given to more include specific rubrics that fit their district music curricula or other guidelines.

### **Extensions**

Each lesson includes optional strategies for extending the lesson either that same day or on a separate day. In some cases, simple or advanced teaching strategies are offered.

Teachers may devise their own lesson extensions as they take advantage of the “teachable moments” that occur in their classrooms!

Please adapt and use any portion of the lessons as you see fit to accommodate your classes, and make revisions as needed. You may copy any of the materials for your use and share our website with parents and other teachers.