

Soundtracks

Objective

To gain a greater understanding and appreciation of songwriting and songs

1. Hand out Soundtrack of our lives sheet - explain concept that music is such an important part of our lives and sometimes songs can remind us of a person, a place or an event. Then ask students to complete these sheets. Ask then for students to volunteer their answers - 1 or 2 from each and ensuring they explain why - doesn't have to be a detailed answer - they can just say the song and that it is personal or that it is about a friend or family member. They will understand the significance of music and how random selections can effect our lives - It can be someone else's favourite song that reminds us of them or song that happened to be playing on a radio or at a disco when an event happened.
2. Play some famous songs - i.e. Fields of Athenry - ask who wrote it? when? Where is Athenry? etc
3. Now that students have a grasp of the concept that songs can have an emotional significance that can be attached by a circumstantial event or as a consequence of subjective choice then introduce the idea that some songs can be interpreted many ways, not just through the most obvious. For example - drawing a song - see the lesson plan example outlined below.
4. As a follow on exercise from drawing a song - ask the students to bring in a photo that means something to them - can be a postcard, family snap, newspaper ad etc - ask them then to write some lyrics (and / or music) based on the photo. In doing so they are interpreting the picture through lyrics and so continuing the fusion and the cycle.

Materials

- A Computer & screen or smart board
 - Speakers
 - CDS, Phone with mp3, iPod or iTunes playlist of suitable songs
 - Paper & pens / pencils for students
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Lesson Plan - Cortez The Killer

1. Find this song on youtube or buy from iTunes (€1.29) Song written by Neil Young and recorded with his band Crazy Horse live in the studio 1975
2. Play the song (without an introduction) and simply ask students to draw the song - whatever they feel like drawing. Their drawing ability is not important.
3. Ask them to explain what they drew and why - discuss why some have similar or different images / interpretations of the song, and ask them to explain what the song was about.
4. Introduce Hernán Cortés - when, where and how he lived, what he did and explain why. Wikipedia will help with his biography, Google Maps will locate where he was born, lived and where he had the most influence. Conflict History will help give a political, social and cultural insight into what was happening in the world at that time.
5. Find the lyrics of the song - this can be done through a Google Search. Look at the lyrics and discuss the style. Is it first person, narrative etc. What techniques has he used? What imagery? etc
6. Find the chords of the song the same way you found the lyrics. Is it in a major or minor key? Why? What is the time signature? What are the instruments you can hear? Is the song recorded live or multi tracked? What is the song structure? The arrangement? etc
7. Count the time signature 4/4 - so 4 beats in every bar. How many beats per minute? How many bars in the song? How many verses? How many chords? How many instruments? How many times does he sing the name "Cortez"? These are all numerical answers and require some basic but important maths.

Links

Where to buy the song.

<http://itunes.apple.com/ie/album/cortez-the-killer/id150114342?i=150113758>

Where to see / hear it.

www.youtube.com

History / war time line

www.conflicthistory.com

Geography

www.maps.google.com

Reference

www.wikipedia.com

About Me

www.peterbaxter.ie

www.songschool.ie