Geography in Music

Teacher: Erick Anno

Grade Level: Secondary (Middle School and High School)

Lesson Summary: In this lesson students use lyrics to understand physical geography. They will identify how regions are described and compare regional wind patterns.

Curriculum Connection: According to Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences, students learn in a variety of different ways. Incorporating music will support students with an “ear” for learning. This lesson addresses a component of physical geography, but can be adapted to teach a specific region or concept in human geography. It may also be used in other subjects, particularly history, science or language arts.

Time Needed: One 40 to 120 minute session.

Lesson Status: Developed.

Materials Needed: Speakers and the ability to play music from multiple media sources (digital storage devices, CD’s, tapes, etc.), preferably sources convenient for students.

Geography Standards: Standards used will depend on the emphasis of your unit.
In general, the lesson is applicable to all the areas acknowledged by Geography for Life. Standard 7: The physical processes that shape the patterns of Earth's surface.

Geospatial Thinking Objectives:
Pattern: Students will describe and map the locations used in songs or genres.
Comparison: Students will compare the places and regions based on the lyrics with concepts of regional winds.

Starting the Lesson: Warm up. Students will discuss with a partner or in a small group the answer to the question: “What are the influences of geography in music?”

Materials: Using stereo system, play appropriate song to the class. Handout of lyrics used in the lesson.

The Lesson:
Step 1 – After playing music, students will be grouped into small groups.

Step 2 – Teacher will hand out the lyrics of songs and have students identify lyrics with physical geography relevance.

Step 3 – In groups, students will determine the following using flow chart:
a) Are the lyrics (a the focus or (b facet in the song?)
b) Do the lyrics (a describe a . . . or (b mention a general or specific feature or process? Accuracy of the lyric’s description? (a accurate (b partially (c inaccurate Explain why.

c) Are the lyrics an analogy? (a to another feature or process (b something anthropogenic

c) If the lyrics are an analogy, do you believe the analogy is (a intended (b interpreted

Incorporate any additional information

Step 4 – A speaker from each group will share their findings with the rest of the class.

Lesson Flow Chart (Jurmu, 2005)

---

End the Lesson: The regional winds discussed in this lesson can lead to other atmospheric and climatic conditions found on the Earth’s surface. Based on informal student observations while making round throughout the class and also through an evaluation of the group findings shared with the class, the teacher will determine if students sufficiently understand the geographic concepts being used.
Lesson Variations:

Option 1 – Music to Teach Human Geography

Same as the inclusion of music for physical geography, music could be used to introduce topics for human geography (political, cultural, etc.)

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>California</th>
<th>Chicago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;California Love&quot; 2Pac (feat. Dr. Dre)</td>
<td>&quot;Chicago&quot; - Da Brat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;California&quot; Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers</td>
<td>&quot;Chicago at Night&quot; - Spoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Marina Del Rey&quot; by George Strait</td>
<td>&quot;Chicago Wind&quot; - Merle Haggard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Option 2 – Comparing Musical Genres and the Influence of Geography

Using numerous songs, the teacher can highlight two artists from the same location and locate the geographic influences used in their songs.

For example, Willie Nelson and Spoon are both from Austin, Texas. Perhaps their styles of music reflect a different receptivity to geographic influences.

Option 3 – Teach a Unit on the Geography of Music

Possible Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seattle Grunge Scene – Prominate Bands</th>
<th>Other US Music Scenes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Jam</td>
<td>Nashville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soundgarden</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice In Chains</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this option, perhaps use the following article:


References:


Chinook Winds
By Corb Lund

I was born with the Chinook wind howlin in my ears
That Rocky Mountain gusty shit, it dried me out for years
Way back I think my grandpa had a rope horse by that name
All I know is, God, here comes that old west wind again

There's lotsa kinds of problems and there's lotsa kinds of pain
Some will sweat the blazing sun and some rot in the rain
Here we got the Chinook wind a blowin' every day
It's gonna send the good dirt east and leave a terrible migraine

Let her blow, let her blow
Whisper me things that I don't know
Let her blow, let her blow
Let her blow away illusions like she melts the driftin' snow

There comes a time I stood my ground and said I've had my fill
Of that moisture sucking west wind roarin' in off them hills
Before it flew me crazy I let it carry me away
They told me, "Son you ain't the first, that breeze will drive a man insane"

Let her blow, let her blow
Whisper me things that I don't know
Let her blow, let her blow
Let her blow away illusions like she melts the winter snow

If you need me you can find me here waitin' on a change
Staring at the distance and askin' what it takes
To make that old Chinook turn back and blow the other way
And maybe if I'm lucky have it blow me home again.
Santa Anna Winds
By Cold War Kids

I got the roof tied tight
Shiny buildings peak
The LA river swims
Snorkels and knees

Seatbelt sticks in the poison heat
My pores are opening

Making headlines again
Santa Anna Winds
Making headlines again
Santa headlines

Take the elevator to the Getty's highest place
See the cliffs fall to the sea
Do an about face

Easter on Olvera Street
Girls nursing new babies in alleyways
In between is a basin like the great divide
Where the 110 swallow the 105
Chutes and ladders leaving no where I begun
Like Joan Didion

Making headlines again
Santa Anna Winds
Making headlines again
Santa Anna Winds
Making headlines again
Santa Anna Winds
Making headlines again
Santa Anna Winds
Making headlines again
Santa Anna Winds

You tore me up by the roots and fell silent again
My seeds have blown around but never land
You tore me up by the roots and fell silent again
My seeds have blown around but never land.
Volcano
By Jimmy Buffet

Chorus:
Now I don't know
I don't know
I don't know where I'm a gonna go
When the volcano blow
(Repeat Chorus)

Ground she's movin' under me
Got ya tidal waves out on the sea
Sulphur smoke up in the sky
Pretty soon we learn to fly
(Repeat Chorus)

Now my girl quickly said to me
Man, you'd better watch your feet
That lava comes out soft and hot
You better lova me now or lova me not
(Repeat Chorus)

No time to count what I'm worth
Hey I just left the planet earth
But a' where I go I hope there's rum
Not to worry, more soon come
(Repeat Chorus)

But I don't want to land in New York City
Don't want to land in Mexico (no no no)
Don't want to land in the Three Mile Island
Don't want to see my skin aglow (no no no)

Don't want to land in Commanche Sky park
Or in Nashville, Tennessee (no no no)
Don't want to land in no San Juan airport
Or the Yukon Territory (no no no)

Don't want to land in no San Diego
Don't want to land in no Buzzard's Bay(no no no)
Don't want to land on no ayutollah
I got nothin a more to say
(Repeat Chorus)