



For Music Educators Grades 1-5

Wolf and Canid Compositions

Description

Students will research the wolf and canid species at the [Endangered Wolf Center](http://www.endangeredwolfcenter.org). They will use what they learn about a favorite species' traits to compose a new musical theme.

Objectives

Students will:

- Research traits of different species of wolves and canids.
- Compose a musical theme to portray a favorite wolf or canid species.
- Demonstrate understanding of elemental phrase forms.
- Perform an 8-beat rhythmic phrase.
- Explain how the species they chose influenced their musical choices.

Standards

Missouri Music Learning Standards

- MU:Cr2A – Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Illinois Music Learning Standards

- MU:Cr2.1.1-5 – Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Materials

- Student access to the internet via computer, tablet, etc.
- One Wolf & Canid Musical Theme worksheet per student (provided below)
- Pencil and crayons or colored pencils
- Two-Beat Building Blocks (use examples provided below or create your own)
- Non-pitched percussion instruments

Procedures

- Introduce students to the Endangered Wolf Center by exploring their website: www.endangeredwolfcenter.org. The Endangered Wolf Center in Eureka, Missouri, is home to many species of wolves and canids. Their mission is to preserve and protect wolves, while teaching about the vital roles these animals play in our ecosystem.
- Model for students how they can navigate through the Endangered Wolf Center's website to find information about different wolf and canid species. Click through "Our pack" at the top of the home page to find information about each species at the Endangered Wolf Center.
 - › If students have access to individual computers or tablets (or one per small group), allow them to explore the website independently. Instruct them to research at least three different species, then pick one that is their favorite.
 - › If students do not have access to individual computers or tablets, explore the different species on the website by using a smart board or reading aloud from the website. Solicit student help to take notes on a whiteboard as you go, including names of different species and traits of each. Then ask each student to choose one species that is their favorite.
- Students can now use their chosen wolf or canid to create a musical theme. Distribute a Wolf & Canid Musical Theme worksheet to each student. This worksheet will help guide them through the process. First, use information learned from the Endangered Wolf Center website to fill in boxes 1-3.
 - › The species I chose: (Write answer in box 1.)
 - › Draw your animal's portrait. What do they look like? (Draw in box 2.)
 - › Describe the traits that you learned about this species. What do they look like? But more importantly, what are some of their behaviors? Did you learn anything about how they sound? What makes them different from other wolf or canid species? (Write answers in box 3.)

Procedures continued

- Then, make compositional choices. What should this animal's musical theme sound like? Depending on students' musical knowledge, you could provide a word bank for each category using words they have learned in music class.
 - › What instrument will play the animal's theme? (Write answer in box 4.)
 - Encourage students to think about an orchestral instrument that would be appropriate, as well as a classroom (non-pitched percussion) instrument on which they will be able to perform their theme.
 - › What tempo should the theme be? (Write answer in box 5.)
 - Select a tempo for your character's theme: *fast* or *slow* or use tempo markings such as *Allegro* and *Andante*.
 - › What dynamic level should the theme be? (Write answer in box 6.)
 - Select a dynamic for your character's theme: *loud* or *soft* (or *forte* or *piano*). Or *starting soft then getting loud* or *starting loud then getting soft* (or *crescendo* or *decrescendo*).
- Instruct students to create a theme for their character, using the following steps (write answers in box 7):
 - › Select an elemental phrase form: a basic pattern used to create a musical phrase. Some examples include *aaab*, *abab*, *abba*, or *abac*. Write the phrase form in the small square boxes.
 - › Each rectangular box represents a single Two-Beat Building Block. Remember to follow your elemental phrase form. Teachers should review the building blocks with students before allowing them to choose. An example of four Two-Beat Building Blocks is provided below. Use these or create your own.
- Invite students to select a non-pitched percussion instrument and perform their musical theme for a small group or for the class. Ask students to share how the species they chose influenced their musical choices.
- If time allows, using xylophones or other pitched percussion or recorders, with a select group of notes, allow students to create melodies from their rhythmic phrases.

Assessment

Using a four-point rubric, look for the following:

- Student chose a wolf or canid species and presented accurate facts about it (1 point).
- Student created an 8-beat phrase following an elemental phrase form (1 point).
- Student performed their rhythm with a steady beat, at the tempo and with the dynamics they chose (1 point).
- Student described how their musical choices were influenced by their chosen species' traits (1 point).

Two-Beat Building Blocks

Fox Ca - nid

This block contains two musical examples. The first is a single quarter note. The second is a pair of eighth notes beamed together.

Car - ni - vore

This block contains two musical examples. The first is a pair of eighth notes beamed together. The second is a single quarter note.

Key - stone spe - cies

This block contains two musical examples, both consisting of a pair of eighth notes beamed together.

Wolf

This block contains a single quarter note followed by a wavy line representing a wolf's howl.

Name: _____

Date: _____



Wolf and Canid Musical Theme

1. My species



2. Portrait

3. Traits

4. Instruments

Orchestral Instrument:

Classroom Instrument:

5. Tempo

6. Dynamics

7. Musical Theme

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