

COUNTRY COUNTDOWN

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit introduces students to the world of country and western music. The students will write, act, dance and draw their way into this entertaining style of music. The first section is quite structured as students copy down informative overhead notes about country music and artists. “Extra” assignments such as the word scramble, matching exercise, crossword and wordsearch can be easily incorporated during this part. The remaining assignments are more open-ended and build a degree of flexibility into the unit. This innovative approach, with a refreshingly Canadian emphasis, is sure to make students give a big “Yahoo!!!”.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Notes and Exam** - Students learn about the history of country music, the changing style of country music, the most common instruments used as well as some of the most well known stars of Canadian country music past and present.
2. **Song Analysis** - Students listen to a musical selection from the past as well as a current selection and then analyse and compare the two songs.
3. **Image Association** - Students design a CD cover that would be appropriate for a song analysed.
4. **Line Dance** - Students create a line dance to a country music selection.
5. **CCMA Awards** - Students create a drama of the Canadian Country Music Awards acting as hosts, announcers, nominees and award winners.
6. **Extras** - Also included is a word scramble, matching exercise, wordsearch and enrichment crossword. These assignments are easy to teach, stand by themselves and teachers can incorporate them at any place in the unit.

OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Letter Writing** - Students collect addresses from a tape or CD cover and write a fan letter to a favourite country star.
2. **Instrument Research** - Students present a report on an instrument that is used in a country band.
3. **Artist In The News** - Students research a current country artist and prepare a written report. The report could include personal information, pictures and musical accomplishments.

POSSIBLE RESOURCES

A number of excellent resources exist including:

1. “Country Wave Magazine” - Webb Press Graphics Ltd., Langley, B.C.
2. “Encyclopedia of Canadian Country Music” by Rick Jackson
3. “Country Line Dancing” - Quality Video
4. Newspapers, T.V. Guide

COUNTRY AND WESTERN MUSIC

In the last ten years, country music has exploded in popularity. This is especially true in Canada which is producing some of country music's newest and brightest stars such as Shania Twain, Terri Clark and Paul Brandt. In North America, more country music CDs and tapes are sold than all other types of music combined!

THE HISTORY

The roots of Country and Western music date back to the 1600's when immigrants from the British Isles brought their folk music to North America. This was fiddling and singing music. Solo fiddlers played dance music at country dances (barn dances) and weddings. This became one of the main sources of entertainment in small towns and among close knit families.



COUNTRY MUSIC EXAM

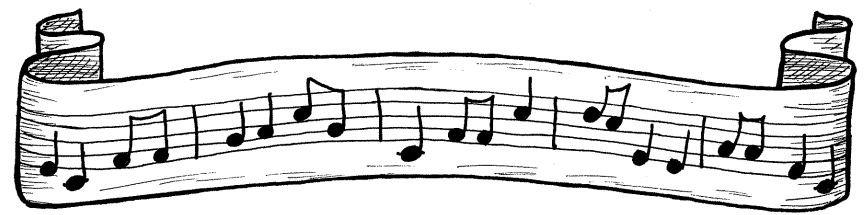
Name: _____

Fill in the Blanks

- The man known as the "yodelling cowboy" was _____.
- The standard instrumental group during the 1920's was the _____.
- Tom Connor's first big hit was _____.
- Connor's had a nickname. What was it and how did he get it?

- One of the most popular variety shows to appear on Canadian television was _____.
- During what decade did country music become available on radio and record albums?

- This famous singer's first big hit was called "Snowbird". _____
- _____ is one of Canada's current country superstars and her name means "I'm on my way".
- Three types of lyrics found in Country and Western songs are:
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____



BIRTHPLACE MATCHING

Name: _____

Match the country music artist with their birthplace. (Some 90's country stars have been thrown in) Good Luck!

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------|---------------------------|
| 1. Wilf Carter | _____ | Saint John, New Brunswick |
| 2. Tom Connors | _____ | Cochrane, Alberta |
| 3. Shania Twain | _____ | London, Ontario |
| 4. George Fox | _____ | Springhill, Nova Scotia |
| 5. Tommy Hunter | _____ | Windsor, Ontario |
| 6. Lisa Brokop | _____ | Montreal, Quebec |
| 7. Terri Clark | _____ | Port Hilford, Nova Scotia |
| 8. Anne Murray | _____ | Midale, Saskatchewan |
| 9. Johner Brothers | _____ | Surrey, British Columbia |
| 10. Carroll Baker | _____ | Port Medway, Nova Scotia |

COUNTRY CROSSWORD

Name: _____



Across

- Another name for a violin.
- Influenced modern country music. Last name - "Williams".
- Anne Murray's big hit.
- A "Swiss" style of country music.
- The beat.
- The most successful country artist of all time.
- This might acoustic or electric.
- The different sections of music such as verse and chorus.
- A "twangy" style of guitar that is played sitting down.

Down

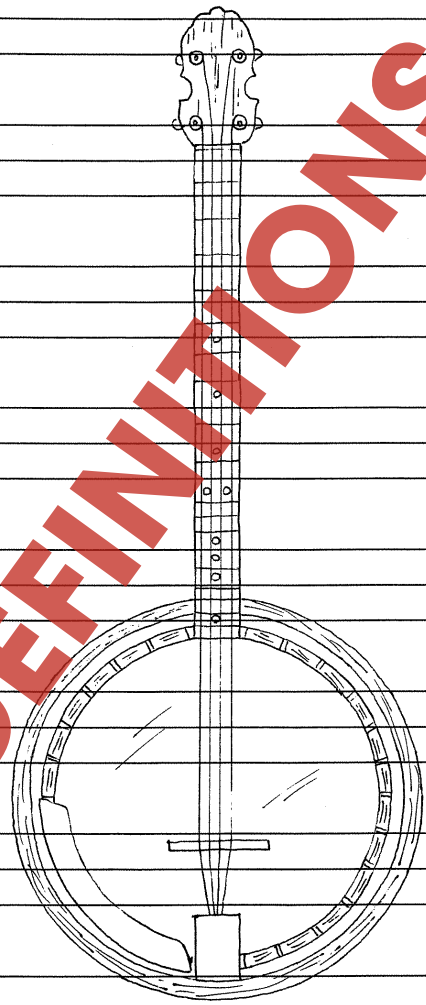
- The tune.
- The loudness or softness of the music.
- Two voices that blend together.
- The feeling of the music.
- Stompin' Tom's famous potato.
- Means, "I'm on my way."
- Played in the kitchen with Dinah.
- Percussion instruments.
- The speed of the music.
- A "sneaky" George of country music.

ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

Name: _____

Provide an appropriate definition for each musical element.

1. Form _____
2. Mood _____
3. Tempo _____
4. Harmony _____
5. Dynamics _____
6. Rhythm _____
7. Melody _____
8. Instruments _____



COUNTRY MUSIC COMPARISON

Name: _____

When making your comparison, remember to consider the lyrics, the style, and the instruments.



SONG TITLES

PAST _____

PRESENT _____

WANTED

SIMILARITIES

DIFFERENCES

REWARD OFFERED!!!



SONG ANALYSIS - Guided Listening Sheet

Name: _____

Instructions: Use this guide to help you analyse the song presented. You will hear the song several times to focus on one element at a time. Be specific about what you heard and where you heard it. For example: The tempo was very fast at the beginning of the song but slowed during each verse.

1. **Introduction**
Song Title: _____ Composer: _____
2. **Tempo**
Fast or slow? Where? _____
3. **Dynamics**
Soft or loud? Where? _____
4. **Mood**
Happy or sad? Where? _____
5. **Melody**
What instruments play the melody? Is the melody high or low?

ASSIGNMENT #4 - LINE DANCE

Student Objectives

- Students will become familiar with a number of country line dance steps and express themselves through the creation of a dance composition.
- Students will understand that dance phrases should be repeated yet also recognize that contrast in a dance creates interest.

Student Activity

- Students will create a line dance to a country music selection.

Suggested Teaching Strategies

- Choose a country song that has a good beat.
- Ask students to demonstrate any line dance they may already know.
- Discuss some basic line dance moves.
 - grapevine
 - slap leather
 - heel press
 - pivot
 - slide
 - hop
 - quarter turn
 - half turn
 - full turn
- Discuss the sequencing of moves that are put together to create a dance. These are called dance phrases. Note that dance phrases or parts of dance phrases are repeated.
- Practise some dance phrases together.

