



Lesson Plan

Cover the Music

Grades

4, 5, 6

Subjects

Art, Language Arts, Music, Social Studies

Time Allotted

15–20 minutes for five days

Setting

Classroom

Group size

No limit

Skills

Listening, interpretation, drawing

Methods

Students will listen to Civil War era songs and read accompanying lyrics to sing songs and then design and illustrate a sheet music cover.

Materials

Civil War songbooks with music and lyrics (see suggestions), CD or tape player, copies of lyrics, CD's or tapes of Civil War music, An example of an illustrated sheet music cover from the period (see songbooks), assortment of paper, assortment of drawing and coloring supplies.

Keywords

Battle cry
Bonnie
Comrades
Exile
Goober peas
Illustration
Motto
Palaces
Rally
Parody
Standard
Sheet music
Traitor
Tyrants

Objectives

At the end of the activity, students will be able to:

- *Recognize the words and tunes to songs sung by Union and Confederate soldiers during the Civil War.*
- *Explain what emotions are evoked by lyrics.*
- *Tell the significance of the song "Home Sweet Home" to the Battle of Stones River.*
- *Use information found in songs to design a cover for sheet music*



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The story of the Civil War can be told entirely through the music of the time. Both sides sang songs about every aspect of the conflict. Music has long been important in the lives of all people. The Civil War soldiers and civilians were not exceptions. The average soldier had a lot of time on his hands. A favorite pastime was singing. Music gave soldiers a way to express their emotions and experiences. They sang in camp and on marches. There were songs for entertainment, to lift morale, to give courage and to remind them of their loved ones at home.

The night before the Battle of Stones River, after the bands had finished their usual evening serenade, Federal bands struck up slowly and softly “Home Sweet Home.” As the notes came through the stillness of the night, soldiers of both sides were wondering what tomorrow would bring: each soldier wondering if he would be wounded, or die, or if he would ever see home again. Then a Confederate band joined, and then another, until all the bands of each army were playing “Home Sweet Home.” This continued for some time until the bands one by one ceased playing and the sweet music faded away into the night.

Though the nation was bitterly divided, it was during this period that a distinctive national melodic style emerged. There was little difference in the music of the North and South. Most music was a mixture of foreign folk songs, gospel tunes, minstrel songs and Black spirituals. Identical melodies with different lyrics (parodies) could be heard on both sides. Copyright laws were different than they are today and those that existed were often ignored once the country divided.

There was no way to record and store sound during the Civil War. New songs were often learned by purchasing sheet music and singing it over and over again. Sheet music was as popular as CDs and tapes are today. A typical piece of sheet music in the 19th century was two, four, or six-page booklets. Illustrated front covers were prevalent by mid century and the back page often contained advertisements. A song introduced by an attractive picture could make the music all the more interesting to the customer. Many times music was purchased because it had a battle scene, General or beautiful woman on its cover.

A process called lithography, which uses chemicals and a block of limestone, was used to produce the drawings. Similar to a rubber stamp, a drawing was designed directly on the stone in reverse image and then treated so that ink only stuck to the image. Then it was “stamped” on the paper to produce the lithograph.

ACTIVITIES

- Play music as students enter class or lesson time begins. Introduce the above information and discuss lyrics and the emotions they evoke. Show examples of sheet music and how it was illustrated.
- Pass out copies of “Home Sweet Home,” “Battle Cry of Freedom” and parody, “The Bonnie Blue Flag,” “Just Before the Battle, Mother” and “Goober Peas.”
- Listen again to the tunes, encouraging students to sing.
- Discuss the significance of “Home Sweet Home” to the Battle of Stones River.
- At the end of the week allow students to choose a song they find interesting. Then use the theme of the song to create and design an illustration for a sheet music cover.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Write a song about a feeling, or happening from the era or about school life, etc.
- Write a short story about what one of the Civil War songs describes such as “Write a Letter to My Mother” or “Tenting Tonight on the Old Campground.”

RESOURCES

Currie, Stephen. *Music in the Civil War*. Betterway Books, 1992.

Songbooks, Tapes and CDs

Glass, Paul. *Singing Soldiers: A History of the Civil War in Song*. DaCapo Press, 1975. (Illustrations, sheet music and lyrics)

Crawford, Richard. *The Civil War Songbook*. Dover Publications, 1977. (Illustrations, sheet music and lyrics)

Silber, Irwin. *Songs of the Civil War*. Dover edition, 1995. (sheet music and lyrics)

Silverman, Jerry. *Ballads and Songs of the Civil War*. Mel Bay Publications, 1993 (Illustrations, sheet music and lyrics)

Bobby Horton, *Homespun Songs of the C.S.A. Volumes 1,2 &3*. (Confederate music)

Bobby Horton, *Homespun Songs of the Union Army Volume 1 & 2*. (Federal music)

APPENDIX
Song Lyrics

The Bonnie Blue Flag

Words: Harry Macarthy

Music: "The Irish Jaunting Car"

1. We are a band of brothers and native to the soil,
Fighting for our Liberty with treasure, blood and toil;
And when our rights were threaten'd the cry rose near and far,
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a Single Star!

Chorus:

Hurrah! Hurrah! For Southern rights hurrah!
Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a Single Star.

2. As long as the Union was faithful to her trust,
Like friends and brethren kind were we, and just;
But now, when Northern treachery attempts our rights to mar,
We hoist on high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Chorus

3. First gallant South Carolina nobly made the stand,
Then came Alabama and took her by the hand;
Next, quickly, Mississippi, Georgia and Florida,
All raised on high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Chorus

4. Ye men of valor gather round the banner of the right,
Texas and fair Louisiana join us in the fight;
With Davis, our loved President, and Stephens, statesmen rare
We'll rally round the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Chorus

5. And here's to brave Virginia, the Old Dominion State,
With the young Confederacy at length has linked her faith;
Impelled by her example, now other States prepare
To hoist on high the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Chorus

6. Then cheer, boys, cheer, raise up a glorious shout
For Arkansas and North Carolina now have both gone out,
And let another rousing cheer for Tennessee be given,
The single star of the Bonnie Blue Flag has grown to be eleven.

Chorus

7. Then here's to our Confederacy, strong we are and brave,
Like patriots of old we'll fight, our heritage to save;
And rather than submit to shame, to die we would prefer,
So cheer for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.

Chorus

APPENDIX
Song Lyrics

Battle Cry of Freedom (Rallying Song)

Words and Music: George Fredrick Root

1. Yes we'll rally 'round the flag, boys, rally once again,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom,
We will rally from the hillside, we'll gather from the plain,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom.

Chorus:

The Union forever, Hurrah, boys, Hurrah!
Down with the traitor up with the star;
While we rally round the flag, boys, rally once again
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom.

2. We are springing to the call of our brothers gone before,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom,
And we'll fill the vacant ranks with a million Free men more,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom.

Chorus.

3. We will welcome to our numbers the loyal, true and brave,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom,
And although he may be poor he shall never be a slave,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom.

Chorus.

4. So we're springing to the call from the East and from the West,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom,
And we'll hurl the rebel crew from the land we love the best,
Shouting the battle cry of Freedom.

Chorus.

APPENDIX
Song Lyrics

Just Before the Battle, Mother

Words and Music: George Fredrick Root

1. Just before the battle, Mother, I am thinking most of you,
While upon the field we're watching with the enemy in view,
Comrades brave are round me lying fill'd with tho'ts of home and God;
For well they know that on the morrow some will sleep beneath the sod.

Chorus:

Farewell, Mother, you may never
Press me to your heart again;
But O, you'll not forget me Mother
If I'm number'd with the slain.

2. Oh, I long to see you, Mother and the loving ones at home,
But I'll never leave our banner till in honor I can come.
Tell the traitors, all around you that their cruel words, we know,
In ev'ry battle kill our soldiers by the help they give the foe.

Chorus.

3. Hark! I hear the bugles sounding, 'tis the signal for the fight,
Now may God protect us, Mother as He ever does the right.
Hear the "Battle Cry of Freedom." How it swells upon the air,
Oh, yes we'll rally round the standard or we'll perish nobly there.

Chorus.

APPENDIX
Song Lyrics

Home! Sweet Home!

Words: John Howard Payne

Music: Sir Henry Bishop

1. 'Mid pleasures and Palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble there's no place like home!
A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there,
Which seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.
Home! Home, sweet sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! There's no place like Home!

2. An Exile from Home, Splendour dazzles in vain!
Oh! Give me my lowly thatch'd Cottage again!
The Birds singing gaily that came at my call,
Give me them with the peace of mind dearer than all!
Home! Home, sweet sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! There's no place like Home!

3. To thee, I'll return overburdened with care,
The heart's dearest solace will smile on me there.
No more from that cottage again will I roam,
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.
Home! Home, sweet sweet Home!
There's no place like Home! There's no place like Home!

APPENDIX
Song Lyrics

Battle Cry of Freedom (Southern Version)

1. Our flag is proudly floating on the land and on the main,
Shout, shout, the battle cry of Freedom;
Beneath it oft we've conquered and will conquer oft again,
Shout, shout, the battle cry of Freedom.

Chorus:

Our Dixie forever, she's never at a loss
Down with the eagle and up with the cross.
We'll rally 'round the bonny flag, we'll rally once again
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom.

2. Our gallant boys have marched to the rolling of the drums,
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom;
And the leaders in charge cry, "Come boys, come!"
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom.

Chorus.

3. They have laid down their lives on the bloody battle field,
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom;
Their motto is resistance—"To tyrants we'll not yield!"
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom.

Chorus.

4. While our boys have responded and to the field have gone,
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom;
Our noble women also have aided them at home.
Shout, shout the battle cry of Freedom.

Chorus.

APPENDIX
Song Lyrics

Goober Peas

Words: P. Pindar, Esq.

Music: P. Nutt, Esq

1. Sitting by the roadside on a summer day
Chatting with my messmates passing time away,
Lying in the shadow underneath the trees,
Goodness, how delicious, eating goober peas!

Chorus:

Peas! Peas! Peas! Peas!
Eating goober peas!
Goodness, how delicious,
Eating goober peas!

2. When a horseman passes the soldiers have a rule,
To cry out at their loudest, "Mister, here's your mule,"
But another pleasure enchantinger than these,
Is wearing out your Grinders, eating goober peas!

Chorus.

3. Just before the battle the Gen'ral hears a row,
He says, "The Yanks are coming, I hear their rifles now."
He turns around in wonder and what do you think he sees?
The Georgia Militia eating goober peas!

Chorus.

4. I think my song has lasted almost long enough,
The subject's interesting but rhymes are mighty rough,
I wish the war was over when free from rags and fleas,
We'd kiss our wives and sweethearts and gobble goober peas!

Chorus.