

Connecticut State Department of Education

Music Standards
Middle School Grades 6-8

Music Standards

Vocal

Students will sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of songs.

Students will sing accurately and with good breath control throughout their singing ranges, alone and in small and large ensembles.

Students will sing with expression and technical accuracy a repertoire of vocal literature with a difficulty level of 2, on a scale of 1 to 6, including some songs performed from memory.

Students will sing music representing diverse genres and cultures, with expression appropriate for the work being performed.

Students will sing music written in two and three parts.

Students who participate in a choral ensemble or class will, in addition, sing with expression and technical accuracy a varied repertoire of vocal literature with a difficulty level of 3, on a scale of 1 to 6, including some songs performed from memory.

Instrumental

Students will play, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of instrumental music.

Students will perform on at least one instrument accurately and independently, alone and in small and large ensembles, with good posture, good playing position and good breath, bow or stick control.

Students will perform with expression and technical accuracy on at least one string, wind, percussion or classroom instrument a repertoire of instrumental literature with a difficulty level of 2, on a scale of 1 to 6.

Students will perform music representing diverse genres and cultures, with expression appropriate for the work being performed.

Students will play by ear simple melodies on a melodic instrument and simple accompaniments on a harmonic instrument.

Students who participate in an instrumental ensemble or class will, in addition, perform with expression and technical accuracy a varied repertoire of instrumental literature with a difficulty level of 3, on a scale of 1 to 6, including some solos performed from memory.

Improvisation

Students will improvise melodies, variations and accompaniments.

Students will improvise simple harmonic accompaniments.

Students will improvise melodic embellishments and simple rhythmic and melodic variations on given pentatonic melodies and melodies in major keys.

Students will improvise short melodies, unaccompanied and over given rhythmic accompaniments, each in a consistent style, meter and tonality.

Composition

Students will compose and arrange music.

Students will compose short pieces within specified guide-lines, demonstrating how the elements of music are used to achieve unity and variety, tension and re-lease, and balance.

Students will arrange simple pieces for voices or instruments other than those for which the pieces were written.

Students will use a variety of traditional and nontraditional sound sources and electronic media when composing and arranging.

Notation

Students will read and notate music.

Students will read whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth and dotted notes and rests in 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, 3/8, and alla breve meter signatures.

Students will read at sight simple melodies in both the treble and bass clefs.

Students will identify and define standard notation symbols for pitch, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, articulation and expression.

Students will use standard notation to record their musical ideas and the musical ideas of others.

Students who participate in a performing ensemble or class will, in addition, sight-read, accurately and expressively, music with a level of difficulty of 2, on a scale of 1 to 6.

Analysis

Students will listen to, describe and analyze music.

Students will describe specific music events in a given aural example, using appropriate terminology.

Students will analyze the uses of elements of music in aural examples representing diverse genres and cultures.

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the basic principles of meter, rhythm, tonality, intervals, chords and harmonic progressions in their analyses of music.

Evaluation

Students will evaluate music and music performances.

Students will develop criteria for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of music performances and compositions and apply the criteria in their personal listening and performing.

Students will evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their own and others' performances, compositions, arrangements and improvisations by applying specific criteria appropriate for the style of the music, and offer constructive suggestions for improvement.

Connections

Students will make connections between music, other disciplines and daily life.

Students will compare in two or more arts how the characteristic materials of each art (sound in music, visual stimuli in visual arts, movement in dance, human relationships in theatre) can be used to transform similar events, scenes, emotions or ideas into works of art.

Students will describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of music and other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated.

Students will identify a variety of music-related careers.

History And Cultures

Students will understand music in relation to history and culture.

Students will describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.

Students will classify by genre and style (and, if applicable, by historical period, composer and title) a varied body of exemplary (that is, high-quality and characteristic) musical works, and explain the characteristics that cause each work to be considered exemplary.

Students will compare, in several cultures of the world, the functions music serves, roles of musicians, and conditions under which music is typically performed.

Glossary for Music Standards

Alla breve. The *meter signature C (with a vertical slash through the C) indicating the equivalent of 2/2 time.

Articulation. In performance, the characteristics of attack and decay of tones and the manner and extent to which tones in sequence are connected or disconnected (such as legato, staccato, and marcato).

Classroom instruments. Instruments typically used in the general music classroom, including, for example, recorder-type instruments, chorded zithers, mallet instruments, simple percussion instruments, *fretted instruments, keyboard instruments, and electronic instruments.

Diction. The *articulation or pronunciation of words when singing, including both vowel and consonant sounds.

Dynamic levels, dynamics. Degrees of loudness.

Elements of music. Pitch, *rhythm, *harmony, *dynamics, *timbre, *texture, *form.

Expression, expressive, expressively. With appropriate *dynamics, phrasing, *style, and interpretation and appropriate variations in dynamics and tempo.

Form. The overall structural organization of a music composition (e.g., AB, ABA, call and response, rondo, theme and variations, sonata-allegro) and the interrelationships of music events within the overall structure.

Fretted instruments. Instruments with frets (strips of material across the fingerboard allowing the strings to be stopped at predetermined locations), such as guitar, ukulele, mountain dulcimer, and sitar.

Genre. A type or category of music (e.g., sonata, opera, oratorio, art song, gospel, suite, jazz, madrigal, march, work song, lullaby, barbershop, Dixieland).

Harmony. The chordal or vertical combination of pitches.

Intonation. The degree to which pitch is accurately produced in performance, such as among the players in an ensemble.

Level of difficulty. For purposes of these standards, music is classified into six levels of difficulty:

Level 1—Very easy. Easy keys, *meters, and rhythms; limited ranges.

Level 2—Easy. May include changes of tempo, key, and meter; modest ranges.

Level 3—Moderately easy. Contains moderate technical demands, expanded ranges, and varied interpretive requirements.

Level 4—Moderately difficult. Requires well-developed *technical skills, attention to phrasing and interpretation, and ability to perform various meters and rhythms in a variety of keys.

Level 5—Difficult. Requires advanced technical and interpretive skills; contains key signatures with numerous sharps or flats, unusual meters, complex rhythms, subtle *dynamic requirements.

Level 6—Very difficult. Suitable for musically mature students of exceptional competence.

(Adapted with permission from NYSSMA Manual, Edition XXIII, published by the New York State School Music Association, 1991.)

Meter. The grouping in which a succession of rhythmic pulses or beats is organized; indicated by a *meter signature at the beginning of a musical work or section.

Meter signature. An indicator of the *meter of a musical work, usually presented in the form of a fraction, the denominator of which indicates the unit of measurement and the numerator of which indicates the number of units that make up a measure.

MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface). Standard specifications that enable electronic instruments such as the synthesizer, sampler, sequencer, and drum machine from any manufacturer to communicate with one another and with computers.

Ostinato. A short musical pattern (rhythm, melodic phrase, or bass line) that is repeated consistently throughout a composition.

Rhythm. The durations in time of a series of musical notes.

Staves. Plural of staff (the five parallel lines on which music is written).

Style. The distinctive or characteristic manner in which the *elements of music are treated. In practice, the term may be applied to, for example, composers (the style of Copland), periods (Baroque style), media (keyboard style), nations (French style), *forms or types of composition (fugal style, contrapuntal style), or *genres (operatic style, bluegrass style).

Technical accuracy, technical skills. The ability to perform with appropriate *timbre, *intonation, and *diction/*articulation, and correct pitches and *rhythms.

Texture. The manner in which musical lines or notes are interwoven in a section or work.

Timbre. The character or quality of a sound that distinguishes one sound source (such as instrument or voice) from another.

Tonality. The harmonic relationship of tones with respect to a definite center or point of rest; fundamental to much of Western music from ca. 1600.