

Integrated subject areas:

- English Language Arts
- Social/Emotional Learning
- Fine Arts

Grade(s): 4-6**Lesson length:** 40 minutes**Instructional objectives:**

- Students will work in small groups.
- Students will create an original sound composition.
- Students will perform in front of their peers.
- Students will listen to the first movement of *Spring* by Vivaldi.

“I can” statements:

- I can express my imagination through music.
- I can work with my classmates.
- I can visualize and describe sounds that I hear.

Chicago Reading Initiative Integration

- Comprehension
- Word Knowledge
- Fluency
- Writing

Spring from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*

DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students will use their creativity and imagination to compose a short piece of music illustrating several images of spring. Students will work cooperatively within a small group of students to perform their composition.

The students' musical works will then be used to compare to the form used in Antonio Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. Students will listen to the first movement of *Spring* from *The Four Seasons* and notice when major changes occur from section to section.

Vivaldi's use of clear transitions between sections of *Spring* from *The Four Seasons* provides students with the opportunity to audibly identify the composer's themes and notice the work's musical form.

In order to perform the musical skills required in this activity, students should have the ability to experiment with a limited set of classroom instruments and create a sequence of sounds that correspond to a non-musical theme.



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Materials

- Hand percussion or other instruments, for example: agogo bell, cabasa, claves, cowbell, egg shaker, frame drum, guiro, maracas, ocean drum, rainstick, shakere, tambourine, triangle, tube shaker, etc.
- Copies of picture “score” (see below)
- Recording of Antonio Vivaldi’s *The Four Seasons*
- CD Player

Supplemental Resources:

- For more information about musical scores, visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musical_score
- For more information about *The Four Seasons*, visit [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Four_Seasons_\(Vivaldi\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Four_Seasons_(Vivaldi)).

PROCEDURE

1. Divide class into five groups. Each group will be responsible for creating a short musical piece based on an assigned theme. The 5 themes are:
 - A tree in full bloom
 - A pair of singing birds
 - A flowing stream
 - A thunderstorm
 - Bright sunshine
2. Distribute classroom instruments and allow each group ten minutes to create their piece. Encourage them to use their voice and body as well. Each sound piece can be as short as 10 seconds, but should be able to be repeated.
3. Bring the class back together and have each group perform their piece. Make any comments or suggestions to refine their composition. Have students rehearse again if necessary.
4. Distribute the picture **score**, a nine picture sequence that shows the appropriate order for a performance. The score is read from left to right, top to bottom. Most musicians, including every member of a symphony orchestra, read their parts from a score.
5. Direct a performance of the class groups using this as your score. The piece should continue all the way through without pause.

Try to direct the students’ performance *without* verbal cues, using only your intuitive gestures. Rehearse and repeat if necessary.
6. Discuss how the piece sounded. Use the following questions to begin your conversation.
 - Were you able to identify the themes by only hearing their musical sounds?
 - Did we follow the order of picture/themes in the score?
 - Did our sounds seem to take on a bigger form or structure when played in this sequence?

7. Explain that Antonio Vivaldi composed *The Four Seasons* in 1723 and that it is a set of four violin concertos. It is Vivaldi's best known work and one of the most popular pieces of the Baroque music period.

Play a recording of *Spring* from *The Four Seasons*. Tell the class that this composition also follows the same score as their own compositions. Ask the students to identify the theme or picture that corresponds to each section of Vivaldi's music. Feel free to repeat the recording; the more familiar you are with the music, the more you detail you will notice.

8. Further points of discussion and reflection:
 - Are you able to hear the main changes in the various sections of the music?
 - What kind of pattern did Vivaldi use in organizing this piece?
 - Was there a point where you got lost in following the score? Where?
 - Where were the points where it was easy to find your place in the score?
 - Do you think other composers might use ideas like this when they create music?
 - How did our piece of music compare to the structure of Vivaldi's music? How were they similar or different?
 - How do you think your group worked together?

Variations

- Instead of *composing music* based on the 5 themes, have students *draw images* inspired by each theme. Their drawings will create a new, original score for this piece of music.

Extensions

- Many other musical works depict scenes of nature through sound. Listen to Rossini's *William Tell Overture* and create another 'picture score' to describe the main sections of the piece.
- Let students draw and then share their pictures, describing where the music changes along with their pictures.
- Take this new set of pictures and ask the students to compose a story to the sequence. Compare the two processes of composition in music and writing.

NOTES

VOCABULARY

Baroque – the name of the style of classical music written between 1600 and 1750

Concerto – a common form of music that features one solo instrument; there are usually three sections of a concerto called “movements”

Score – a piece of printed music showing parts for all the instruments in the ensemble

Violin – the highest pitched string instrument in the symphony orchestra

ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS

FINE ARTS

Learning Benchmark 25.A: Know the language of the arts—understand organizational principles of the arts.

Learning Benchmark 26.A.3c: Describe the processes used in composing, conducting and performing.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Learning Benchmark 1.C.3c: Compare, contrast and evaluate ideas and information.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Learning Benchmark 2C.3b: Demonstrate cooperation and teamwork to promote group effectiveness.



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