



EUROPEAN UNION LESSON PLAN

Title of Lesson Plan: Analyzing Song Lyrics as Poetry: What do the lyrics of European national anthems show about the countries they represent?

Grades: 9th

Brief Description: Students will read the lyrics of national anthems of the countries of the European Union, to analyze what each country values and how each country wishes to be perceived. Students will then write their own "personal anthems" to show their values and express themselves to the world.

Time: 3 class periods (45-60 minutes each)

Objectives:

Students will be able to identify the values presented in several national anthems based on their lyrical content. Students will write their own personal anthems to express their values and to reflect on what they have learned while researching anthems.

Materials Needed:

Lyrics to "The Star Spangled Banner"

Lyrics and recordings of the national anthems of countries within the European Union (students' choice of nations, so students will provide the lyrics after they research them)

Recording of the music of the European Union anthem (Beethoven's "Ode to Joy")

Access to computers for internet research and for word processing

Directions:

Step 1: Anticipatory Set/Free Write: Have students write silently in their journals or notebooks to answer the following questions:

What purposes do national anthems serve?

Why and when do we sing them?

What can you learn about a country by analyzing the lyrics to its national anthem?

After a few minutes of writing, ask students to share their responses to the questions.

Step 2: Ask students to recall words, phrases, and ideas that came from "The Star Spangled Banner." Ask students why they think these lyrics stand out to them, and what these lyrics show about America's identity and values. Present the lyrics to the entire song to the class to fill in the gaps if the class was not able to recall the entire song. If there were any parts of the song missing from the class's recollection, ask why the students think they forgot about those parts.

Step 3: Direct students to http://europa.eu/abc/european_countries/index_en.htm, and have each student choose a nation of the European Union. Students should then find the national anthem of the country of their choice (using a search engine such as Google) or by linking to that country's official tourism website off of the Europa website. If class size is under 27 students, teacher may require each student to choose a different nation. Students should find both the lyrics and a recording of the music of the anthem.

Step 4: Students should read the lyrics of the national anthem of the country of their choosing, and should answer the following questions in writing:

What nation did you select?

When was the national anthem written?

Based on the lyrics of this anthem, what does this country value? Use a quote from the song to support your answer.

Based on the lyrics of this anthem, how does this country wish to be perceived? Use a quote from the song to support your answer.

Step 5: Students should present their research, their personal responses, and the recording of the anthem to the class (this can be a formal or informal assessment, and can be for a grade or merely for discussion, based on the needs of the teacher).

Step 6: The teacher should now play the music to the European Union anthem, Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." Students should answer the following questions in writing:

Why do you think this song was selected as the anthem of the European Union?

What values should the anthem of the European Union express?

Should there be lyrics to the European Union's anthem?

What obstacles stand in the way of writing lyrics to this anthem?

Step 7: Students should now write their own personal anthems, to express their own values. These should be written out in poetic verse.

Step 8: Students should present (read) their personal anthems to the class.

Assessment:

This lesson provides many opportunities for teachers to assess students. Teachers may assess students' writing, as students will answer many questions in writing throughout the lesson, and will also write their own personal anthems as the culmination of the lesson. Teachers may also assess students' presentations, when students share their research with the class after they have researched an anthem from a European Union country and when students present their personal anthems.

Extension:

This lesson can be adapted for students at nearly any grade and level. This lesson can also build upon skills taught in other subject areas, such as social studies, history, and music. Students interested in further exploration could write music to their personal anthems, could study current events shaping the European Union, and could read more literature and poetry from nations of the European Union.

Educational Content Standards:

NC Standard Course of Study 1.02, 1.03, 4.01, 4.02, 4.03, 5.02, 6.01, 6.02

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Subject Area(s): English