

# Melodies that Rock!

## Discipline

Music

## Grade and/or Course Level(s)

Elementary, Grades: K-3

## Overview

Students will compose short melodic phrases using commonly found household items, such as a rock to create “Melodies that Rock.” Students will explore music contour in relationship to high and low notes, and melodic patterns and motion.

## Essential Understanding, Knowledge, Skills, and/or Processes

- Pitch: High vs. Low
- Melodic patterns that move upward, downward, and stay the same
- Melodic movement that is a step, leap, or repeat

## Outcomes

- Students will compose a melody that has shape and is visually represented by household objects.
- Students will identify and demonstrate important elements of musical contour, patterns and motion including ascending, descending and repeated notes.
- Students will make connections between musical contour and the placement of music notes on the staff.

## SOLs

- K.12 The student will explore music literacy, including high and low pitches and rhythms represented by a variety of notational systems.
- 1.12 The student will demonstrate music literacy.
  - a. Identify high and low pitches represented by a variety of notational systems.
- 2.12 The student will demonstrate music literacy.

- a. Identify written melodic patterns that move upward, downward, and stay the same.
- 3.12 The student will demonstrate music literacy.
  - a. Identify written melodic movement as step, leap, or repeat.
  - b. Demonstrate the melodic shape (contour) of a written musical phrase.
  - c. Use a variety of notational systems.
- K.1 The student will improvise and compose music.
  - b. Improvise melodic or rhythmic patterns.
- 1.1 The student will improvise and compose music.
- 2.1 The student will improvise and compose music.
  - d. Compose simple pentatonic melodies represented by a variety of notational systems.
- 3.1 The student will improvise and compose music.
  - c. Compose melodies represented by a variety of notational systems.

## Materials

- Piece of paper or a sidewalk
- Pencil/marker or chalk
- Small rocks, or other small household objects like cereal, coins, or beads.

## Student/Teacher Actions

1. Teacher leads students in vocal warm-ups that have melodic contour, such as vocal sirens, or roller coaster track sing-a-longs.
2. Teacher leads class discussion to describe the shape of the warm-up. Does the melodic pattern move upward, downward, or stay the same? As a class, draw the shape of the vocal warm-up.
3. Teacher works with students to make connections between the shape of the vocal warm-up and pitches on a staff. As a class, transfer the original shape of the vocal warm-up to another drawing using lines that represent a musical staff. Teacher identifies the starting pitch and ending pitch (both being the same note), and makes visual connections between shape and pitch/melodic contour. If the melodic content goes up, the pitch on the staff is higher, etc. For more advanced students, discuss musical patterns in relationship to ascending, descending and repeated notes, as well as step, leap and repeated motions.

4. Teacher explains the “Melodies that Rock” challenge, with specific parameters depending on the grade level. Examples:
  - a. Kindergarten: Draw a melody that has two high sections and three low sections, your song must start and stop, low
  - b. 1<sup>st</sup> grade: Draw a melody that has four high sections and four low sections, your song must start and stop, low
  - c. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade: Draw a melody that starts low and ends low, but has at least four notes, “do”, “mi”, “sol”, and “la”
  - d. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade: Draw a melody that starts on “do” and ends on “do”, but has “mi”, “sol”, and “la”
5. Students compose a melodic contour shape on a blank sheet of paper, or on a sidewalk with chalk, using the assigned parameters. Students should draw a continuous shape that represents their melody.
6. Students then transfer their melodic contour shape to the musical “staff” using rocks or other small household items. Students draw a staff depending on level: K-1<sup>st</sup> one-line staff, 2<sup>nd</sup> three-line staff, 3<sup>rd</sup> five-line staff. Students label notes (low and high or solfège).
7. Students perform their compositions. Suggestions for performance include: singing, Orff instruments, homemade instruments and virtual instruments.
8. Students add a title for their original work.
9. Students reflect on the “Melodies that Rock” challenge by answering the sentence stem, “My song has a shape that reminds me of...”

## Assessment Strategies

- Formative assessment can include student interviews with questions about pitch choices and melodic contour, ex. “Where in your song are the high pitches?” “Does the song start and end in the same place, or on the same note?” Virtual formative assessment can be submitted via a digital form, worksheet or discussion board.
- Summative assessment can include a rubric or design brief that includes specific guidelines such as, each melody must contain two skips, two steps, and one leap. Virtual summative assessment can include student submissions of pictures or videos of final projects. Photo examples 1 and 2 included below for reference.
- Students can demonstrate understanding by playing their compositions using online song makers and virtual instruments. Possible online song makers and virtual instruments can be found at [Chrome Music Lab](#) and [onlinepianist.com](#).

## Differentiation Strategies

- Primary elementary students can use a one-line staff to compose with only “High and Low”
- Provide students with a template that contains lines and spaces representing the “staff” for the various levels.
- Differentiate the number of notes available for student use from four to eight pitches.
- Assign a musical form for students to follow, such as ternary form: ABA.

## Extensions and Connections

- Students can perform and revise student compositions using free online resources that enable students to hear their composition.
- Students can collaborate to create and perform “rock melodies” with one student composing, and one performing, then switching roles.
- Students can collaborate and combine compositions to form a larger “class-composition” and explore elements of musical form.

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# Melodies That Rock Visual Examples

Example 1.



Example 2.

