

What is the Greatest Purpose of Music?

Lesson plan for developing a Kialo discussion

Suggested length: 1 class period (45-55 minutes)

Lesson components:

- Opener (10 minutes)
- Activity
 - Part A: Developing the Kialo discussion and having a follow-up conversation (focus of 1 class period)
 - Part B: Introducing the song collection assignment (7 minutes)
- Optional closer (6-10 minutes)

Assessment

Students will each collect 5 pieces of music they think exemplify the greatest purpose(s) of music. Students will then write a paragraph for each piece, explaining why they think that the piece is a good example.


[Optional] You can also grade students on their participation in the Kialo discussion. (see suggested rubric in **provided materials**)


Opener (10 minutes)


1. Tell students that in today's class, they will discuss the purpose of music. Tell students that there is no one correct answer to this question, and people have many different opinions on this question.
2. Play a clip of Marvin Gay's 1971 hit, "[What's Going On](#)" (recommended stop at 1:38), and ask students to pay attention to the lyrics. Then ask students what they think the purpose of the piece might be.
3. Play a clip of "[High Mountain, Flowing Water](#)" (recommended stop around 1:40), an iconic work of Chinese classical guzheng (GOO-jung) music that dates back to the 4th century BCE. Then ask students what they think the purpose of the piece might be. Ask students if the purpose of this piece overlaps at all with Gaye's song: Why or why not?

Activity

Part A: Developing the Kialo discussion and having a follow-up conversation (focus of 1 class period)

1. Inform students that the entire class will work together to develop a Kialo discussion on the topic, “What is the greatest purpose of music?”
2. Display the topology diagram of the Kialo discussion (this can be found by clicking the  button in the top-left corner of the discussion), and go over the 4 theses (in blue). Ask students which purposes “What’s Going On” and “High Mountain, Flowing Water” might exemplify.
3. Instruct students to log into the Kialo discussion and begin working to each add 3-4 claims to the discussion that respond to others’ claims.

TIP: You can keep track of how many claims each student has added by pressing the  button in the top-left of the discussion and looking at the “Tasks” tab.

4. When students are finished adding claims, browse the topology diagram of the Kialo discussion (click the  button) to informally review the discussion, taking time to discuss interesting claims.

Part B: Introducing the song collection assignment (7 minutes)

1. Share the following assignment prompt with students: *Collect 5 pieces of music that you think exemplify the greatest purpose(s) of music. Write a paragraph for each piece, explaining why you think that the piece is a good example of the purpose(s) of music.*

TIP: You can decide whether and how students should turn in the pieces of music themselves. Including links on a document is a simple approach.

Optional closer (6-10 minutes)

1. Show a clip of [kecak](#) (keh-CHA), a music and dance drama performed by Balinese Hindus. Ask students what they think the purpose of the piece might be, and facilitate a discussion around their answers.