



MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS MONTH® 

Music In Our Schools Month® General Music: 4th Grade, 2020–2021
“America the Beautiful”

Library of Congress Link: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ihas.100010520.0/?sp=1>

Recording: <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.100010409/>

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Overview: Students will investigate and analyze the Katherine Lee Bates poem “America the Beautiful” and arrange a simple accompaniment. Students can document their accompaniments using iconic or standard notation or by using recording software.

Prerequisite Skills

For students to be successful in this unit they will need knowledge of and experiences with the following:

- Playing recorder or other pitched instruments (Boomwhackers, Orff instruments).
- Using iconic or standard notation or recording software.

Instructional Goals/Objectives

Launching Point 1: Students will explain how “America the Beautiful” connects to and was influenced by specific interests, experiences, purposes, or context.

Launching Point 2: Students will select and organize musical ideas to arrange a simple, melodic accompaniment to “America the Beautiful.”

Launching Point 3: Students will use standard and/or iconic notation and/or recording technology to document personal simple harmonic musical ideas.

National Core Arts Standards (2014)

CREATING

Anchor Standard #1: Imagine: Generate musical ideas for various purposes and contexts.

Essential Question: How do musicians generate creative ideas?

Enduring Understanding: The creative ideas, concepts, and feelings that influence musicians' work emerge from a variety of sources.

Specific Performance Standard

MU:Cr 1.1.4b. Generate musical ideas (such as rhythms, melodies, and simple accompaniment patterns) within related tonalities (such as major and minor) and meters.

Anchor Standard #2: Plan and Make: Select and develop musical ideas for defined purposes and contexts.

Essential Question: How do musicians make creative decisions?

Enduring Understanding: Musicians' creative choices are influenced by their expertise, context, and expressive intent.

Specific Performance Standards:

MU:Cr 2.1.4a. Demonstrate selected and organized musical ideas for an improvisation, arrangement, or composition to express intent, and explain connection to purpose and context.

MU:Cr2.1.4b. Use standard and/or iconic notation and/or recording technology to document personal rhythmic, melodic, and simple harmonic musical ideas.

RESPONDING

Anchor Standard #9—Evaluate: Support evaluations of musical works and performances based on analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

Essential Question: How do we justify the quality of musical works and performances?

Enduring Understanding: The personal evaluation of musical works and performances is informed by analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

Specific Performance Standard:

MU:Re9.1.4a. Evaluate musical works and performances, applying established criteria, and explain appropriateness to the context.

Assessments

Assessment should be embedded throughout each Launching Point.

Materials and Library of Congress Resource Links for the Unit**Library of Congress Link to Sheet Music:**

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/ihas.100010520.0/?sp=1>

Recording: <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.100010409/>

Historical Information: <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200000001/>

Teacher Talk—To the Teacher (Historical and Cultural Information)

Launching Point 1: Students will explain how “America the Beautiful” connects to and was influenced by specific interests, experiences, purposes, or context.

Lyricist: Katherine Lee Bates (1859—1929)

Bates was born in Massachusetts and was a prolific writer of poetry, essays, and books. She was a professor at Wellesley College. She was the first woman to write a textbook for American literature, which helped launch it as an area of study in college.

For more details on Bates’s life and accomplishments, visit the following pages.

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katharine_Lee_Bates
- https://www.songhall.org/profile/Katharine_Lee_Bates

March is also Women’s History Month, which provides additional connection opportunities.

Poem Inspiration: In 1893, Bates rode to the summit of Pike’s Peak on a prairie wagon. While Bates was admiring the surrounding area from the summit, the opening lines of the poem came to her. The poem was first published in *The Congregationalist* on July 4, 1895. While it was sung to familiar folk tunes at the time or “Auld Lang Syne,” the melody sung today was written by Samuel Ward in 1882.

The Library of Congress has a more detailed one-page summary on the song’s history (<https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200000001/>).

Children’s Books: Several children’s books based on the Bates poem that can enhance connections to ELA and visual art standards. Because all the books share the same title, here is a chart to distinguish between illustrators with the books’ ISBNs. All books are titled *America the Beautiful*.

Author (Year)	Illustrator	ISBN-10 or 13
Katherine Lee Bates (2002)	Neil Waldman	9780689852459
Katherine Lee Bates (2002 & 2020)	Wendell Minor	1623541212
Katherine Lee Bates (2004)	Robert Sabuda	0689847440
Katherine Lee Bates (2010)	Chris Gall	0316083380
Katherine Lee Bates (2018)	Katie Melrose	164170019X

Launching Point 2: Students will select and organize musical ideas to arrange a simple, melodic accompaniment to “America the Beautiful.”

There is no new cultural or historical information about the song.

Launching Point 3: Students will use standard and/or iconic notation and/or recording technology to document personal simple harmonic musical ideas.

There is no new cultural or historical information about the song.

Launching Point 1

Objective: Students will evaluate the lyrics of “America the Beautiful” and explain connections and influences by specific interests, experiences, purposes, or context.

Essential Question: How do we justify the quality of musical works and performances?

Specific Performance Standards

MU:Re9.1.4a. Evaluate musical works and performances, applying established criteria, and explain appropriateness to the context

Procedure

1. Ask students to share famous landmarks, places visited, and/or places students want to visit in America.
2. If time allows, elicit details describing what students would see or experience at these places.
3. Share the story of Katherine Lee Bates’s trip to Colorado as inspiration for her poem “America the Beautiful” (<https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.2000000001/>).
4. Ask students to listen for the rich details Bates uses to describe what she observed on her trip.
5. Listen to the recording as many times as needed (<https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.100010409/>).
6. Allow student sharing and discussion about what was heard.
7. Guide the discussion to connect the Bates lyrics to her experience.
8. Sing “America the Beautiful.”

Assessment:

Informal and formal assessment options include

- Sharing of places visited, landmarks, or details in the song.
- Creating a checklist of students’ names, and mark when students share.
- Interview students or small groups on what different pictorial descriptions from the song mean.
- Have students or groups create visual art described in the song (see extension activities).

Extension or At-Home Components

1. Listen to the song multiple times.
2. Listen to different recordings of the song. Choose your favorite. Write a paragraph justifying choice.
3. Sing with or without the recording.
4. Use sheet music to sing all four verses.
5. Have students create visual art to represent different images represented in the song. This can include crayons, colored pencils, digital art, or presentation software.

Launching Point 2

Objective: Students will select and organize musical ideas to arrange a simple, melodic accompaniment to “America the Beautiful.”

Essential Questions

How do musicians generate creative ideas?

How do musicians make creative decisions?

Specific Performance Standards

MU:Cr1.1.4b. Generate musical ideas (such as rhythms, melodies, and simple accompaniment patterns) within related tonalities (such as major and minor) and meters.

MU:Cr 2.1.4a. Demonstrate selected and organized musical ideas for an improvisation, arrangement, or composition to express intent, and explain connection to purpose and context.

Procedure

1. Explain students will arrange and perform an accompaniment to “America the Beautiful.”
2. Display chord chart. You may have to create one using the notation (letter names, Boomwhacker colors, etc.) familiar with your students.
3. Using pitched instruments, play notes or chords to the song (see option ideas).
 - a. Show only one note from each chord. Whole group plays through accompaniment.
 - b. Show two or more notes from each chord. Give students a choice on which note to play or assign groups to each note.
4. Allow students to repeat making different melodic choices.
 - a. Perform in whole or small groups.
 - b. Have groups of singers, recorders, Boomwhackers, or Orff instruments.
 - c. Change groups.
5. Ask guiding questions between each repetition toward finalizing personal arrangement.
6. Perform finalized arrangement.
7. Explain why those choices were made. Possible answers may include skill, difficulty, or melodic movement.

America, the Beautiful

Words by Katharine Lee Bates

Melody by Samuel Ward

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "Oh beau-ti-ful for spa-cious skies, for am-ber waves of grain, For pur-ple moun-tain ma-jes-ties, a-bove the fruit-ed plain! A-mer-i-ca! A-mer-i-ca! God shed His grace on thee, And crown thy good with bro-ther-hood, from sea to shi-ning sea!"

Chords indicated above the staves:

- Staff 1: G, D, D⁷, G
- Staff 2: D, A/C[#], A⁷/C[#], D, D⁷
- Staff 3: G, D, D⁷, G
- Staff 4: C, G, C, D⁷, G

Assessment

Informal and formal assessment options include

- Small-group or solo sharing.
- Peer review.
- Using a rating scale (1 = needs improvement, 2 = good, 3 = excellent) or rubric (below expectations, meets expectations, or exceeds expectations) to assess melodic choices or instrument playing technique.

Extension or At-Home Components

(This could refer to other grade levels or other ideas for this Launching Point.)

1. Create a different melodic arrangement for each verse.
2. Create movement to represent the accompaniment chords or personal accompaniment arrangement.

3. Use computer software to explore different timbres for the accompaniment.
4. Create a rhythmic ostinato (whole-group, small-group, or solo) to perform with the personal accompaniment arrangement.

Launching Point 3

Objective: Students will use standard and/or iconic notation and/or recording technology to document personal simple harmonic musical ideas.

Essential Question: How do musicians make creative decisions?

Specific Performance Standards

MU:Cr2.1.4b. Use standard and/or iconic notation and/or recording technology to document personal rhythmic, melodic, and simple harmonic musical ideas.

Procedure

1. Recall personal accompaniment arrangement to “America the Beautiful.”
2. Using notation method familiar to students (icons, staff, Boomwhacker colors, etc.), have students write personal arrangement (on whiteboard, paper, using manipulatives).
3. If recording capabilities are available, have students record their arrangement, then share it with the class.

Assessment

Informal and formal assessment options include

- Using a rating scale (1 = needs improvement, 2 = good, 3 = excellent) or rubric (below expectations, meets expectations, or exceeds expectations to assess notation).
- Peer review.

Extension or At-Home Components:

1. Work in large or small groups or solo.
2. Use dry-erase boards.
3. Create cards with choices from each chord for students to manipulate.
4. Using recording software, add percussion or dynamics to recording.
5. Create visual art representing personal arrangement.