

Folk Songs

SAMPLE





About the Course

Students sing folk songs connected to the time period (1800-1900).

This topic is included in the following course(s): Music: Intro, Music: Level 1, Music: Level 2, Music: Level 3, Music: Level 4, Music: Level 5

Folk Songs

The purpose of learning folk songs is twofold: to increase students' enjoyment of music and to situate folk music in its historical context in an effort to give students a richer understanding of the times and places that birthed the songs. A musical score is sometimes included for songs, but does not always exactly match the audio used, since folk songs are primarily oral songs and often take many different forms. Studying folk music helps students grow deep roots in our shared heritage and gives insight into historical events from the perspective of the people who were there.



Scheduling

GRADE	SCHEDULE INFO.	BOOKS
1-12	Folk Songs 1 time/week 10 min	Like a Bird: The Art of the American Slave Song

Sample Weekly View

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Music: Intro				
Sol-fa: Musical Games	Hymns & Spirituals Afternoon Listening		Folk Songs	Music Appreciation
Music: Level 1				
Sol-fa: Level 1	Hymns & Spirituals Afternoon Listening		Folk Songs	Composer Study
Music: Level 2				
Sol-fa: Level 2	Hymns & Spirituals	Folk Songs	Composer Study Afternoon Listening	
Music: Level 3				
Sol-fa: Level 3 Afternoon Listening		Hymns & Spirituals	Folk Songs	Composer Study
Music: Level 4				
Sol-fa: Level 4 Afternoon Listening		Hymns & Spirituals	Folk Songs	Composer Study
Music: Level 5				
Sol-fa: Level 5 Afternoon Listening	Hymns & Spirituals	Folk Songs	Composer Study	



Planning & Prep

Permission to print for non-commercial use. See Alveary group use policy to use lessons in a group context.

LINKS: Click text or scan the QR code in the top corner of the lesson plan pages to view online resources associated with the lessons.

Responsibility for previewing all links rests with the teacher. All links were checked at the time of publication; however, websites change frequently and may contain objectionable content. Please report broken links by contacting us through our website.










Books & Resources

For book rationales and purchase options, click the Book List link or scan the QR code below.

∞ [View Book List Details](#)

Folk Songs

-  Our Work: Grades 1-2
-  Our Work: Grade 3
-  Our Work: Grades 4-6
-  Our Work: Grades 7-8
-  Our Work: Grades 9-12
-  Hymns, Spirituals, & Folk Songs PDF
-  Like a Bird: The Art of the American Slave Song



Supplies

For supply list details and basic supplies helpful to have on hand, click the links or scan the QR code below.

∞ [View Basic Supplies](#)

(No Subject Supplies Assigned)



Quick Links

Folk Songs

- ∞ [Extra Helpings](#)
- ∞ [Hymns, Folk Songs, & Spirituals Youtube Playlist](#)
- ∞ [Hymns, Folk Songs, & Spirituals Spotify Playlist](#)
- ∞ [Musical Terms Appendix](#)

Click THIS text
or scan the QR
code for links.



Folk Songs

How To Teach



Recap

- Specific recap questions are often suggested in the day's plans; ask students what they remember from the last lesson. If nothing comes to mind at first, tell them to give themselves another minute or two and to keep thinking. Our brains are amazing and can usually recall the previous lesson with a minute of effort. Refrain from doing the work of remembering yourself if you are leading the lessons.
- For composer study, a recap might look like a brief discussion about the name or sound of the piece you listened to previously.
- For hymns and folk songs, this might be an effort to hum the melody or recite the words of the song you're currently learning.
- For sol-fa, it might be a quick explanation of the sol-fa syllable you learned or a tricky rhythm or interval you were working to master.
- If students have difficulty recalling, teachers might try showing them a picture or sharing something that the teacher remembers. This will often refresh their memory enough to allow them to recall.
- If students still cannot recall anything from the last reading, then teachers may consider continuing anyway or repeating the last lesson.



Introduce

- Prepare to listen to the day's musical selection by inviting students to consider an interesting musical or historical idea in the lesson. Perhaps it's a unique word, rhythm, instrument, or piece of historical background. You might introduce it by the way, or read a selection of a composer's bio or a brief article to students.



Listen & Sing

- Listen to the day's musical selection.
- Composer study lessons will usually have you listen to a piece of music for 3-8 minutes. If students have a difficult time listening for the duration of the lesson, stop the music at their limit.
- Some students might draw, color, or engage in a handicraft while listening to help extend their listening time. Students who have a difficult time sitting still or listening may benefit from: a fidget of their choice, such as a piece of putty or clay or an afghan; flexible positioning, such as a wobble seat or inverted sitting; or sensory modulation, such as a weighted vest or blanket or adjustment of light, temperature, or sound.
- Hymn, folk song, or sol-fa lessons will sometimes have you listen to a part of the song and then practice echoing back the melody and/or words.



Discuss

- Composer Study: Talk about the musical selection you heard. What stood out to you? What did you notice? What did it make you wonder? Did it remind you of anything? Discuss the tempo, the sound of the music, the instruments used, the volume, and the mood. Why do you think the composer wrote it the way he did?
- Hymns, Spirituals, & Folk Songs: What lines strike you particularly? Is there a rhyme scheme to the lyrics? Is there a progression to each stanza? If you were to add a verse to the song, what would you add? If you took a verse out, how do you think it would change the song? Do the

melody and words go together? Why or why not?

- Sol-fa: Take a minute to reflect on what you learned in the lesson. Write down any notes you want to remember and practice any particular exercises that were tricky.



Connect

- At the end of the lesson, think about how the day's musical selection connects to other books, subjects, characters in history, etc.
- You might copy down a stanza of a hymn in your Commonplace or Copywork book, read a bit more about the history behind a piece of music, jot down a noteworthy date in your Book of Centuries, or discuss a broader question raised in the lesson.

SAMPLE



Term 1

WEEK 1 10m Folk Songs - Lesson 1

Steal Away

Materials: Our Work or Music PDF, Like a Bird

→ INTRO

- The word "steal" usually means to take something that isn't yours. Can you think of any other meanings the word has?
- Tell what you think this sentence means: "Let's steal away now and tell them what we saw!"

→ READ & DISCUSS

Our first folk song for the year is called "Steal Away to Jesus." Its history is somewhat debated. Some think that Nat Turner was one of the first to sing it. Others tell the story of Wallace Willis and how the Reverend Alexander Reid heard Willis singing "Steal Away" (and Swing Low, Sweet Chariot) and told the Jubilee Singers, a famous singing group, about his songs in 1871. It's often hard to trace the history of songs that were orally composed and passed along to others!

Like a Bird p.29

∞ Article Link: History Article 1 or History Article 2

→ LISTEN & DISCUSS

Refer to your Our Work/Music PDF lyrics as you listen.

∞ Music Links: Steal Away (YouTube or Spotify)

WEEK 2 10m Folk Songs - Lesson 2

Steal Away (cont.)

Materials: Our Work or Music PDF, United States Atlas or a Globe

→ RECAP

What do you remember about the history of "Steal Away"?

→ SING

Listen to the full song, paying attention to the lyrics. Then listen again and hum along.

∞ Music Links: Steal Away (YouTube or Spotify)

→ READ OR VIEW

Steal Away became an enormously popular song across the United States and the world because of the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Fisk University was founded in 1866, right after the Civil War ended with the Emancipation Proclamation. Students who had previously had limited access to higher education because of slavery and poverty flocked to its doors. But a few years later, the school was struggling financially, and many feared it would have to close. However, relief came from an unexpected source—one of the school's leaders organized a group of the school's talented singers and set up a series of concerts. Initially, they sang classical and popular songs familiar to their white audiences, but eventually the students began also singing the spirituals that they had sung during the years they were enslaved. These spirituals, like Steal Away and Swing Low, Sweet Chariot, skyrocketed the Fisk Jubilee Singers and the school to fame, and both still exist today! Read or watch more about the Jubilee Singers and listen to a recording of Swing Low, Sweet Chariot from 1909 with the remaining time!

∞ Article Link: Jubilee Singers Article

or

∞ Video Link: Jubilee Singers Video

★ TEACHER NOTE

Feel free to choose your own version of Steal Away to learn. Just know that the lyrics vary widely, so another audio or video is unlikely to match the words in your Our Work or Music books.

● AFTERNOON LISTENING

Be sure to listen to the term's songs throughout the week!

● EXTRA HELPING

View the Extra Helpings page for books, documentaries, and resources on the Jubilee Singers!



Term 1

→ **LISTEN (OPTIONAL)**

∞ Audio Link: *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*

WEEK 3 10m Folk Songs - Lesson 3

Steal Away (cont.)

📄 Materials: Our Work or Music PDF, World Map/Globe/Google Maps

→ **RECAP**

Can you hum the tune of "Steal Away"?

→ **SING & PRACTICE**

Listen to the full song. Then listen again and try to sing along with the recording when the singers repeat the first four lines.

∞ Music Links: *Steal Away* (YouTube or Spotify)

→ **MAPWORK**

The initial group of Jubilee singers disbanded in 1878 after six strenuous years touring across North America and Europe, but a new group came together and began touring again in 1894, singing everywhere from Canada to Kolkata (then Calcutta), from New England to New Zealand.

View the article and map to get a general sense of the choir's tour and look up as many of the places mentioned as time allows. Note that some cities have been renamed.

∞ Article Link: *Jubilee Singer Travels* (start reading at the paragraph under the map which describes the tour)