

Cover Song - Thunder by Imagine Dragons

Level: Junior

Connection to a Culminating Activity:

This lesson will help students understand simple chord patterns used in popular music and apply it to creating a “cover” of a popular song.

Overall Expectations: Grades 4, 5, 6

C1. Creating and Performing

Apply the creative process to create and perform music for a variety of purposes, using the elements and techniques of music.

- Students will use the element of Form (Verse, Chorus, Chord Progressions) to create and perform accompaniments and/or melodies

C2. Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing

Apply the critical analysis process to communicate their feelings, ideas, and understandings in response to a variety of music and musical experiences.

- Students will communicate their understanding of a pop song Form

C3. Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts

Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of musical genres and styles from the past and present, and their sociocultural and historical contexts.

- Students will gain an understanding of the pop music genre and its use and popularity in the 21st century

Specific Expectation (Grade 4):

Creating and Performing

C1.: sing and/or play, in tune, from musical notation, unison and two-part music with simple accompaniments from a wide variety of cultures, styles, and historical periods

C1.2: apply the elements of music when singing and/or playing, composing, and arranging music to create a specific effect

C1.4: use the tools and techniques of musicianship in musical performances

Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing

C2.2: identify the elements used in the music they perform, listen to, and create, and describe how they are used

Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts

C3.2: demonstrate an awareness, through listening, of the characteristics of musical forms and traditions of diverse times, places, and communities

Learning Objectives:

- Students will identify chord changes in a pop song that uses simple chord progressions using I, IV, and V
- Students will identify the form in a pop song (verse, chorus, bridge)
- Students will perform an accompaniment on pitched percussion and/or sing or play a melody on recorder, using different ostinati (repeating patterns) for each part of the song

Success Criteria:

- Students will listen to a few different pop songs that use a I, IV, V chord progression and be able to indicate when they hear a change in chord.
- Students will communicate their understanding of a pop song's form in a way of their choosing (markings on a lyric sheet, invented symbols, movement composition)
- Students will perform as a group a "cover" of a popular song, each playing a part of their choice.

Equipment Requirements:

- Projector/method of displaying slide show
- A/V equipment appropriate for playing the track
- Pitched percussion instruments for demonstrating and learning chords (e.g. xylophone, glockenspiel)
- Instruments for performing cover songs (e.g. ukulele, recorder, etc.)

Prior Student Knowledge Required:

- Students will have an understanding of bars or measures in 4/4 time and how to count beats in a song. Students will have knowledge of the element of Form - the structure and patterns of a song (eg. ABA, verse/chorus).
- Students will have knowledge of how to play a bordun and/or ostinati on pitched percussion instruments and/or play a melody on recorder and/or sing a melody from a pop song and/or play a few chords on a ukulele.

Outline of Lessons

Part 1: Introduction & Song Form

Slide 1: Introduction - What is a Cover Song? (10 minutes)

Activate prior knowledge by brainstorming with the class, access lived experience of students and identify their current level of knowledge and understanding.

- What is a cover song?
- What are popular songs?
- What songs do you listen to?
- What do you call it when an artist/band sings another person's song?

Walk Off the Earth

A band from Burlington, Ontario who gained popularity by first producing cover songs using a variety of non-traditional instruments and vocal styles: [Hello by Adele](#) - performed by Walk Off the Earth and beatbox artist KRNFX

Slide 2: Learning Objectives (5 minutes)

Share learning objectives with students:

- Students will be learning how to listen and analyze a song in order to play their own cover version of a pop song.

Review the creative process and answer any questions students have.

Listen and Analyze (lesson - 20 minutes)

What patterns do you hear in a pop song?

- Ask students to listen to "Thunder" by Imagine Dragons and listen for the lowest note (bass line).
- As a class, start by standing - every time the lower note changes, move to a different pose (staying in one spot).

Listen a second time, sitting down with eyes shut. Use arms to show when different sections of the song start and end. (Students should begin to identify the verse and chorus, and then notice the bridge and a repeat of the chorus - try to avoid talking about lyrics at this time, and focus listening to the instruments)

Slide 3: Slide Map

Listen a third time, following the song map on the slide (note each chord name letter represents one 4-beat bar). Students should listen and look for any patterns in the low notes or drum beats, and in the chord patterns and overall song form.

Class discussion:

- What patterns did they hear?
- What patterns do they see?
- What else did they notice about the “form” of the song or any patterns (chord progressions)?

Part 2: Activity Assignment (30 - 50 minutes)

Students will create their own version of the song’s form to show their achievement of the **first learning objective** (identify and label parts of a song’s form)

- Verse
- Chorus
- Verse (same as first verse)
- Chorus (same as first chorus)
- Bridge
- Chorus (same as first and 2nd chorus)

Options to show what you know:

- Dance: use a different movement for each section of the song (verse, chorus, etc) and “perform” the song (Note - this is not choreography - keep it VERY simple)
- Visual Art: create different patterns to represent each section of the song
- Literacy: write out the lyrics using section headings
- Media: create a slideshow using the lyrics and a different section on each slide

Students may at this time perform and submit their assignments and receive feedback.

Sample student check-in for ongoing feedback on the next page.

I can follow the form of the song by:

I can follow the form of the song by:	 I could use some help. I'm a little lost.	 I'm working on it. I'm almost there.	 I think I've got it!	 I've mastered it. I can help others.
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving <input type="checkbox"/> Creating <input type="checkbox"/> Writing <input type="checkbox"/> _____				

Name: _____

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I can follow the form of the song by:	 I could use some help. I'm a little lost.	 I'm working on it. I'm almost there.	 I think I've got it!	 I've mastered it. I can help others.
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving <input type="checkbox"/> Creating <input type="checkbox"/> Writing <input type="checkbox"/> _____				

Name: _____

Part 3: Chord Progressions (30 - 40 min)

Instruction 1: Introducing Chords

What is a chord? Demonstrate the C (C,E,G) and F (F,A,C) chords on a keyboard or pitched percussion instrument using 3 mallets.

Demonstrate how chords work in a song by singing a couple of examples and showing when the chord changes - use a keyboard or ukulele (e.g. "Twinkle Twinkle," "London Bridge").

Instruction 2: Learn the Two Chords in the Verse

With students standing, jump from one side to the other along with the chord changes in the verse.

Using pitched percussion instruments, have students play the C and then find the 5th note (G) and play them together with C being the lower one. We can use the 1st and 5th note of the chords from pop songs to accompany the song.

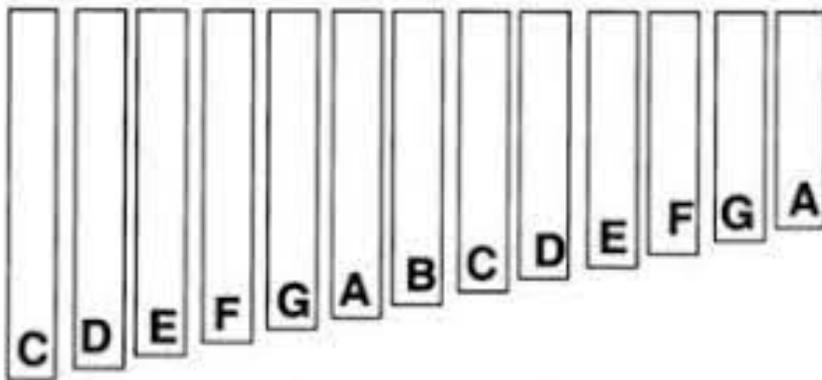
Teach the chords for Thunder, students playing the 1st and 5th for each chord.

Instruction 3: Show What You Know

Play along with the 1st verse to Thunder playing the 1st and 5th of each chord on BEAT ONE of each bar.

- C Chord: play C with left and G with right
- F Chord: play F with left and C with right
- Am Chord: play A with left and E with right

**Tip for students - there should always be 3 bars/keys between your 2 mallets/hands*



To conduct, you can jump from one side to another showing when to change from C to F.

Teach the chords for the rest of the song in the same way.

Once most students have mastered each section, allow students time to experiment with different rhythms instead of playing on beat 1 of each one.

NOTE: All students learn all the parts of the song (melody, chords, percussion) and then choose which instrument for their final performance. Assessment is done throughout the process, not just at the final product.

Sample student check-in for ongoing feedback:

I can play the chords along with the song	 I could use some help. I'm a little lost.	 I'm working on it. I'm almost there.	 I think I've got it!	 I've mastered it. I can help others.
<input type="checkbox"/> Verse <input type="checkbox"/> Chorus <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Song				

Name: _____

Part 4: Practice (Several Periods)

In preparation for the final performance, provide as many opportunities for students to move along and around the creative process as possible. Have students perform for each other and provide positive feedback. Allow multiple opportunities to make changes and revisions. Provide ongoing feedback and use peer and self evaluations.

Part 5: Final Performance (Varies)

The final performance of the song will take the shape of what the students are interested and able to do with the song. It may be the whole class, or you may be able to have small groups perform different cover versions. Some students may like to use an alternative to the pitched percussion such as boom whackers. Others may want to be a vocalist and sing the lyrics. Still others may prefer a movement composition. The important part is the creative process which involves multiple versions and revisions and reflections before a final performance.

Opportunities to “perform” real music can be small, such as inviting their classroom teacher to come and watch, or large, such as performing at a school assembly or concert with parents. Ensure each student is able to participate according to their interest and ability and you will help to encourage a life-long love of music.

Lyrics on the last page.

Final Rubric Sample

Learning Goals: <i>I can</i>	1 with limited effectiveness	2 with some effectiveness	3 with considerable effectiveness	4 with a high degree of effectiveness
1 - Identify and label parts of a song (form)				
2 - Identify and play along with chord progressions in a song				
3 - Use the creative process to create and play a cover version of the song				

Name: _____

“Thunder” (Imagine Dragons) - Lyrics

Just a young gun with a quick fuse
I was uptight, wanna let loose
I was dreaming of bigger things
And wanna leave my own life behind

Not a yes sir, not a follower
Fit the box, fit the mold
Have a seat in the foyer, take a number
I was lightning before the thunder

Thunder, thunder
Thunder, thun', thunder
Thun-thun-thunder, thunder, thunder
Thunder, thun', thunder
Thun-thun-thunder, thunder
Thunder, feel the thunder
Lightning and the thunder
Thunder, feel the thunder
Lightning and the thunder
Thunder, thunder
Thunder

Kids were laughing in my classes
While I was scheming for the masses
Who do you think you are?
Dreaming 'bout being a big star

They say you're basic, they say you're easy
You're always riding in the back seat
Now I'm smiling from the stage while
You were clapping in the nose bleeds

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