

**Title:** One Word Composition**Level:** J/I (could work with some primary or older students)**Connection to a Culminating Activity:**

This lesson will help students to create a musical, fun and welcoming environment in the music room, while also allowing for creativity, performance and composition using informal music notation. This can lead into more formal notation for composition and could start an entire unit or could be a stand alone lesson at the beginning of the year to set the tone. This lesson can also be a great introduction (or reminder) of the elements of music.

**Overall Expectation:** *(Taken from grade 5)*

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

**Specific Expectation:** *(Taken from grade 5, easily adapted to other grades)*

C 1.2: Apply the elements of music when singing and/or playing, composing, and arranging music to create a specific effect

C 1.3: Create musical compositions for specific purposes and audiences

*Note that the above two headings are based on terminology in the Ontario Arts Curriculum 2010 (Revised), and educators from different areas should adapt or vary those descriptions as necessary.*

**Learning Objectives:**

At the end of the lesson students will:

- Perform a completed composition with a group
- Use different elements of music to add interest to their composition.

**Success Criteria:**

- I worked together effectively within my group to create and practice our group composition.
- I used our word in many different ways to create our desired effect.
- I performed with my group in front of the class.

**Prior Student Knowledge Required:**

No prior knowledge is required. It is helpful to have some understanding of the elements of music, but it isn't necessary.

**Materials Needed:**

- Markers for every student.
- Large Chart paper (one for every group of 4ish students)
- List of Words to give to groups

**Outline of Lesson****Instruction # 1 (~25 minutes)**

Teacher prompt: Have you ever been around a young child and they asked you *why* about a million times in a minute? Today we will be taking a single word like *why* and making a composition about it. You're going to draw this out on paper using your word so that anyone will be able to recreate your composition based on what you have written down. The catch? You can only write your word and other symbols. **No instructions.** This composition may use speaking voices or singing voices, you can have lots of people talking at once or few. You can play around with speed, volume, length of sound, all of those aspects but you have to figure out how you're going to communicate that on your paper. Work together until you have something to present to the class that is approximately **30 seconds-1 minute** long.

Divide your students in groups of **4-5** and give a large chart paper to each group. Every student will need their own marker. Each group will need a word. Try to pick single syllable words that people say in many different ways.

**Some examples:**

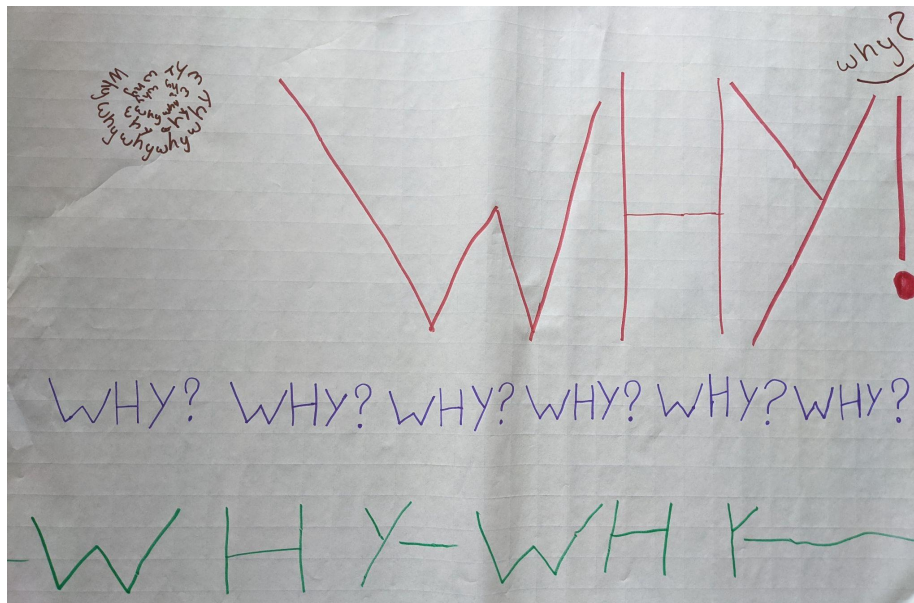
Hi, Bye, Yes, No, Yay, Wow, Who, Why, Oh, Fine, Fire, Pop, etc.

Allow about 20ish minutes for groups to create and practice. Check in on them frequently and ask questions about their papers in particular. The papers need to be clear.

## Instruction # 2 (~25 minutes)

After all groups are finished it is presentation time. But SURPRISE! You will take the paper from each group and give it to another group to present first. Give them **5 more minutes** to interpret the new composition and then they will share with this class. After a group presents a composition, have the original group present what it was supposed to sound like and discuss what went well on the paper and what could have been different. It is really important that this section of the lesson is FUN. These are silly compositions and there are NO wrong answers. This is where you can establish the atmosphere of your classroom. We don't make fun of others, we can be silly and have fun and it's fine because everyone is doing it. Presentations often take about 20 minutes. I am able to fully complete this lesson in a 50 minute period. If you have time at the end or as a follow up lesson, **consolidate the learning** by using the papers that the compositions were created on to explore how the **elements of music** were communicated and review (or introduce) **proper musical terminology**.

For example: "Do you see how this group used YES in very big lettering, that shows us that we were supposed to yell that loudly. In music, we call volume *dynamics* and when we say something strongly that would be *forte*." You can keep these and revisit them many times for weeks to come.



This lesson plan on One Word Composition was developed by Katie Nicholl (B.Mus, B.Ed, MA, OCT) with Bandology Canada, Inc. [www.bandology.ca](http://www.bandology.ca)

Edited by Alexander Wright (BMus, MA<sup>2</sup>), Music and Education Co-ordinator  
For comments and inquiries, please reach out to [info@bandology.ca](mailto:info@bandology.ca)