

Finding Our Heritage
and the Languages That Make Up Our Heritage
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Duration: 1 Lesson/ 50 min

Grade Levels: 4

Subject: Language Arts, English

Standards:

California State Board of Education Content Standards

Music

- 3.4 Compare musical styles from two or more cultures.
- 3.5 Recognize the influence of various cultures on music in California.

Visual Art

- 3.2 Identify and discuss the content of works of art in the past and present, focusing on the different cultures that have contributed to California's history and art heritage.
- 4.1 Describe how using the language of the visual arts helps to clarify personal responses to works of art.
- 4.2 Identify and describe how a person's own cultural context influences individual responses to works of art.
- 4.3 Describe how the individual experiences of an artist may influence the development of specific works of art.

Language Arts

- 1.0 LISTENING AND SPEAKING STRATEGIES: Students listen and respond critically to oral communication. They speak in a manner that guides and informs the listener's understanding of key ideas, using appropriate phrasing, pitch and modulation.
 - 1.1 Ask thoughtful questions and respond to relevant questions with appropriate elaboration in oral settings.
 - 1.2 Summarize major ideas and supporting evidence presented in spoken messages and formal presentations.
 - 1.3 Identify how language reflects regions and cultures.
 - 1.5 Present effective introductions that guide and inform the listener's understanding of key ideas and evidence.
 - 1.6 Use traditional structures for conveying information
 - 1.7 Emphasize points in ways that assist the listener/viewer in following key ideas and concepts

Classroom Teacher Prep/Materials:

- 1) Copies of the **Leos Janáček** excerpt, In-Class Worksheet, and Worksheet A.
- 2) A recording of a folk tune and an excerpt from Jenufa. (There is a video excerpt available on LA Opera Website: <http://www.laopera.com/media/video/jenufa.01.aspx> . This could be useful if the teacher has internet access and speakers inside a classroom)

- 3) Posters
- 4) Old newspapers and magazines.
- 5) Glue and coloring pencils/markers.

Lesson plan description/procedure:

- 1) Teacher will discuss what makes each person unique. This topic can include broad elements such as the country, as well as individual characteristics and talents.
- 2) The students will read **In-Class Reading-** a part of Janacek’s essay titled *Moravian Folk Songs*.
- 3) There will be a class discussion about the article.
- 4) The students will listen and compare an aria from Jenufa by Leos Janacek, and an American Folk Song.
- 5) There will be a class discussion and students will fill out the **In-Class Worksheet: Be Proud of Your Heritage**.
- 6) The students will be separated into groups and will cut out words and pictures, or draw words and pictures, creating a “Culture Poster.”
- 7) The posters will be presented to class.
- 8) The students will discuss the elements and colors of their poster, as well as how they relate to who we are as unique individuals.
- 9) Students will take the **My Heritage Chart** home and interview their parents to find out what languages and countries make up their heritage.

Goals and Objectives:

- 1) Make students aware of elements that make each person unique.
- 2) Allow students to analyze how language and music reflect our cultures.
- 3) Discuss similarities and differences between our language and another language.
- 4) Come up with differences in phrasing or pronunciation within our language.
- 5) Devise a poster that incorporates ideas of what makes us who we are.
- 6) Present the poster in groups to class, clearly identifying the ideas within the poster.
- 7) Allow students to discuss their heritage with their parents by completing the Worksheet A.

Assessment:

- 1) Students will be able to analyze characteristics that define an individual as well as a group of people.
- 2) Students will be able to compare similarities and differences in language.
- 3) Students will be able to brainstorm the linguistic differences within our culture.
- 4) Students will be able compare a folk song out of our culture to a piece of music from another teacher.
- 5) Students will be able to come up with ideas that make up our culture.
- 6) Students will be able to create a poster and present their ideas to class.
- 7) Students will be able to interview their parents to discuss what makes language and country make up their heritage.

Leos Janáček

From the essay *Moravian Folk Songs* from the Musical Point of View, Prague, 1901

The proof that folk songs originated from words lies in the special character of their rhythm. There is no possibility of dividing them into bar-lines. The rhythms of folk songs, unbelievably rich in variety, can be put into order only by the words. It is impossible to compose a melody and then add words. In Moravian folk songs, the unusual rhythm makes this especially impossible. Each beat in our songs is reasonable and convincing. Each rhythm is timed and accentuated and the whole song sublimated even from the metric point of view. In every note of each song there is, as I we see it, a fragment of an idea. If you leave out a single note from the melody, you perceive that it has become incomplete and has ceased to make sense...

Folk songs are as beautiful as the language from which they spring and are dependent on the locality in which they are sung, on the time at which they are sung, on the occasion, and mood in which they are sung. These various circumstances change the melody and rhythm of the songs. Among the people, there are no singers who would use the songs on occasions when they are not apt; that is to say, in sympathy with the human heart and the human spirit. For this reason, many songs are sung only very rarely. But fortunately, among the people, there are a great number of singers who preserve the songs in their memories.

Excerpt taken from:

Fisk, Josiah. Composers on Music: Eight Centuries of Writings, 2nd edition. Boston : Northeastern University Press, c1997

In-Class Worksheet: Be Proud of Your Heritage

Leos Janáček was a composer who believed that each language has its own unique sound. He believed that folk songs originated from words and he went all over his country listening to and notating examples of the inherent melodies and rhythms in spoken languages, as well as folk songs.

He used a lot of this research in his compositions. Listen to an segment from his opera, *Jenufa* and compare it to an American folk song.

Things to think about: what colors do you think represent this song? Do you want to march to this song or dance? Is it slow/fast? Is it sad/happy? What instruments are you hearing? Can you relate to the feelings that the singer portrays? Is the folk song a part of a bigger work like the aria from *Jenufa*? Are there any similar/different vowels? Similar/different consonants?

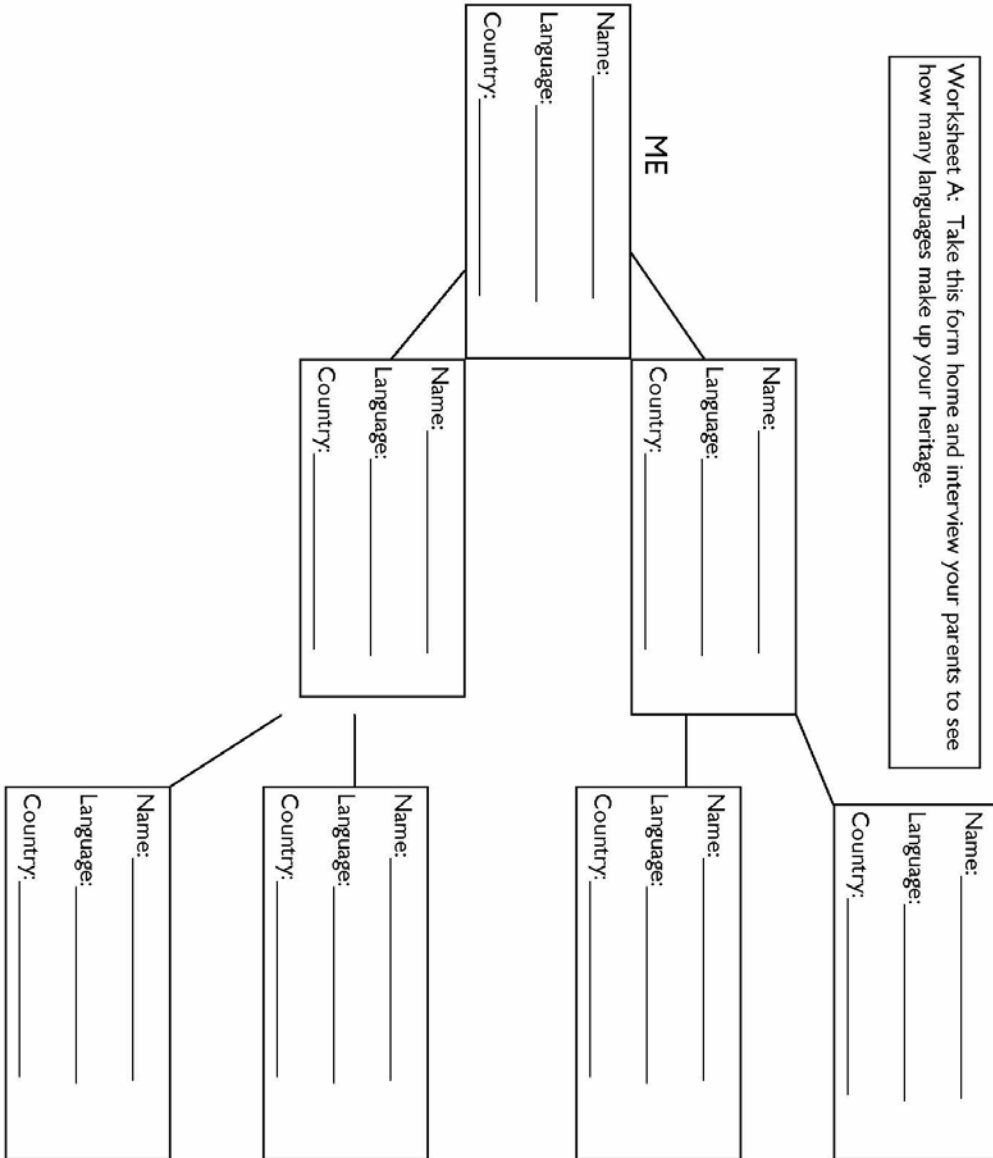
Jenufa Segment		Folk Song
Unique elements	Similarities	Unique elements

In addition to music, what other elements make us who we are? Use magazines and newspapers to cut out pictures and words that make us who we are as a country. In groups, create a poster incorporating all of the cut-outs. Use some of the colors that your group thinks reflect our culture in the poster

Worksheet A

My Heritage Chart

Worksheet A: Take this form home and interview your parents to see how many languages make up your heritage.



We all have some words that we pronounce differently, especially if we compare people in different parts of U.S. Could you think of some examples?