

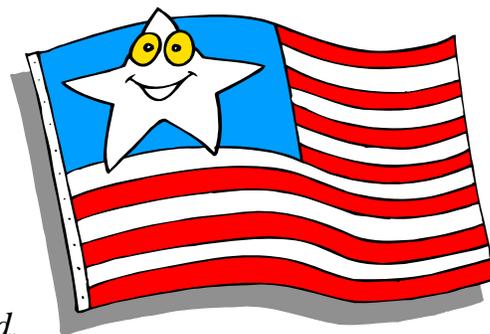
EIGHT GREAT STATES

Grade Level(s): 4th or 5th grade

Type(s) of music: patriotic

Subject area focus: Music & Social Studies

Number of Lesson Plans: 4



Brief Summary: *Students will use the rhythm of the names of eight of our states to create a new composition while the concept of sixteenth note rhythm patterns is reinforced. In the process, they will memorize the names of all fifty states and be able to sing them in alphabetical order. The resulting “Great States” composition will also be performed by its composer.*

Goals and Objectives:

- ♪ *To introduce the concept of sixteenth note rhythm patterns by using the rhythm of the names of our United States*
- ♪ *To reinforce the concept of sixteenth note rhythm patterns by composing a piece based on the rhythm of the names of eight of these states*
- ♪ *To assess the student’s ability to read combination sixteenth note rhythm patterns by performing the composition they have created*
- ♪ *To connect directly with the student’s Social Studies curriculum providing them with the knowledge of the names of all fifty of our states*

General Description / Summary of Lesson: *After an introduction to the names of our United States through the song, “Fifty Nifty United States”, students learn what different sixteenth note rhythm combinations sound like. They use these sounds to create their own music compositions, which they will be able to perform and share with others. In the process, they also memorize the names of all fifty states in alphabetical order.*

Evaluation and assessment: *Although not recorded as a grade, an initial informal measure of whether each student understands the concept of sixteenth note combinations can be taken using the “States Worksheet”. Students, and the teacher, can formally assess their understanding of the concepts by using the “States Self-Assess Tool” as they compare this table to their final product. In addition, the teacher may choose to assess a final performance of the student’s composition using the “Music Performance Rubric”. Finally, the best results are the obvious excitement and pride students show as the music they have written is shared among their peers or displayed in the classroom or possibly on the school’s website.*

Follow-up Activities: *In addition to the options suggested in the lesson plans, this project could be extended in any number of ways including:*

- ♪ *Use the class composition as an “A” section and combine other student pieces to create a rondo form song for the whole class to play. Soloists (the student who wrote that section) could perform their part with the class coming in on each A section. Consider adding a rhythm track using an electronic keyboard to keep the final piece moving.*
- ♪ *Combine pitched instruments with nonpitched by creating a two or four beat “states” ostinato performed on classroom percussion while each student performs their own piece.*
- ♪ *If using the G pentatonic scale suggested, increase the texture by adding Orff instruments providing a bordun or a simple melodic ostinato. Any of the pieces could also be performed in canon.*
- ♪ *Use these pieces as the impetus for a Social Studies project researching or comparing and contrasting the states used in the composition.*
- ♪ *Begin a discussion about patriotic music—what makes “Fifty Nifty United States” a patriotic song? Is the student’s “Great States” a patriotic song?*

Additional Information:

National Standards:

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.

Illinois State Standards:

- 25: Know the language of the arts.
- 26: Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced.



RESOURCES USED

Audio resources (Tapes/CDs) used in lesson: “*Fifty Nifty United States*” composed by Ray Charles, is available in most elementary music texts. (5th Grade textbooks *Spotlight on Music* or *Share the Music* published by MacMillan McGraw-Hill or *Making Music* series published by Scott Foresman.)

It is also available through Classroom Classics (<http://www.classroomclassics.com/>) included in their *God Bless the USA School Performances* package for \$30.

Or you can purchase the sheet music and accompaniment CD through sheetmusicplus.com

Internet Resources:

None are necessary for this project but to extend the lessons consider the following

- ♪ The Nifty Fifty States—an internet hotlist of information on the fifty states (<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/pages/listthe50sj.html>)
- ♪ Fifty Nifty United States—a webquest for 5th graders (<http://www.manteno.k12.il.us/WebQuest/elementary/General/FiftyNiftyUnitedStates/FiftyNiftyUnitedStates.htm>)
- ♪ Preserving Our National Anthem—an in depth study of “The Star Spangled Banner” (<http://OutsideTheBox93.org/StarSpangledBanner>)
- ♪ This Land Is Our Land—learning about the regions of the U.S. through its music (<http://OutsideTheBox93.org/ThisLand>)

Other materials:

You will need the worksheets included with these plans.
This entire project could be done without the use of technology, but in my experience, using software such as *Finale Notepad* (www.finalemusic.com/notepad) and *Audacity* (<http://audacity.idownload.org>) increases the students excitement, engagement and understanding.

Lesson Plan Title: "Singing and Sorting the States"
Lesson Plan # 1 of 4 plans.
This plan describes a SINGLE CLASS PERIOD of 30 minutes.

Objectives of this Lesson Plan: *Students will become familiar with the concept of sixteenth note rhythm combinations and be able to perform various one beat patterns. They will also begin to learn the song, "Fifty Nifty United States".*

Materials used: *Recording of "Fifty Nifty United States", music books with this song or word song sheet, and "StateSort" worksheet*

Prior Knowledge and Experiences/Curriculum Content: *Students have experienced/labeled and played these rhythm values*



in various combinations.

Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Play a recording of Ray Charles' "Fifty Nifty United States" asking students to follow along with their finger during the part where all fifty states are named as they listen. Play it again asking them to sing along when the states are named.

2. *Naming the states:* Ask students to close their books or put away the words to the song and then take volunteers who can name any of the fifty states. List as many as they are able to name on the board or overhead.

3. *Sorting the states:* Tell students that all but three of the states (Louisiana and North/South Carolina) can be sorted by the rhythm of their sounds. For example:

Alabama is  Illinois is  Rhode Island is 
Utah is  and Maine is  .

Working with a partner, invite students to "sort" all of the states that they can think of as well as any they'd like to use from the class list using the "StatesSort" worksheet. As students work, circulate to clarify and correct as needed.

4. *Reflection:* Bring the class back together and ask eight individuals to name a state and indicate which rhythm pattern it fits. Write the names of these states with their rhythm pattern above it on the board or overhead. Ask students to say each state in rhythm consecutively to a steady beat. If time allows, have them clap this initial composition or perform it on various classroom percussion instruments.

Indicators of success: *Students will accurately identify the rhythm pattern that is created by saying the names of various states. Students will speak in rhythm the names of a number of states in order while keeping a steady beat.*

Supplementary Information: *It's important that your students are clear about the rhythmic sound of the various sixteenth/eighth note combinations at least by the end of Lesson Two in order for them to be successful in their final composition.*

Lesson Plan Title: “Reading and Writing the Rhythms”

Lesson Plan # 2 of 4 plans.

This plan describes a SINGLE CLASS PERIOD of 30 minutes.

Objectives of this Lesson Plan: *Students will create their own sixteenth/eighth note rhythm composition based on the names of the states.*

Materials used: *rhythm pattern flashcards, recording of “Fifty Nifty United States”, student music (textbooks or songsheet) of this song, “StatesProject” worksheet, classroom percussion instruments (optional)*

Prior Knowledge and Experiences/Curriculum Content: *Students have experienced/labeled the various sixteenth note combination patterns as they relate to the names of the individual states.*

Procedures:

1. *Introduction: Have students echo back rhythm patterns that you display and say using the names of states. After a few, ask volunteers to label a pattern you show them with state names they think would work.*
2. *Sing “Fifty Nifty United States”. Prior to playing the recording teach students the introduction and coda sections by echo. Encourage students to look away from the words at the repeat of the state naming section.*
3. *Create an “Eight Great States” composition. Hand out the “StatesProject” worksheet and create a class composition using an overhead projector or on the board to demonstrate what they will be doing on their own. Give students the time to complete the worksheet individually. Be available to students as needed to be sure they are sorting the states they have chosen accurately. If time allows, encourage them to copy the rhythm pattern for each state above its name in each of the eight boxes on the worksheet.*
4. *Play a state song. Ask students to share their state project with another student—clapping and saying it for them and then listening to theirs. Students should also play their partner’s piece and if time allows, exchange with an additional student.*
5. *Reflection: Bring all students back together to perform the class state example created earlier in class. Use simple classroom percussion. The piece could be played in canon dividing by like instruments or as a call & response with one group of instruments playing the first state as the second group responds with the second state etc.*

Indicators of success: *Students will accurately “rhythmically sort” the states they have chosen for their project. They will also accurately read/play what they have written with a steady beat.*

Supplementary Information: *Students need to have their “Great States” initial plan completed prior to Lesson 3. If they are not completely accurate in their labeling of the correct rhythm, the teacher can guide and correct during the individual work next lesson.*

Lesson Plan Title: “Completing Our Compositions”

Lesson Plan # 3 of 4 plans.

This plan describes a SINGLE CLASS PERIOD of 30 minutes.

Objectives of this Lesson Plan: *Students will complete their State Project by transferring their initial rhythm composition to the music staff.*

Materials used: *StatesTemplate (3 different versions are included depending upon which method you want your students to use), “StatesSelf-Assess” worksheet*

Prior Knowledge and Experiences/Curriculum Content: *Students have completed the initial States Project Worksheet. Students know the difference between a line note and a space note on the music staff. Students have experience playing the pitches B-A-G-E-D on the recorder (optional).*

Procedures:

1. *Introduction: Using the class rhythm composition created during the previous class, demonstrate how to transfer each state’s rhythm to the music staff. Each state should have all of its notes on the same pitch. Pitch choices are indicated on the States Project Worksheet but these options could be changed based on the instrument on which students will be playing their composition.*

2. *Write the composition on the music staff. Students will spend the bulk of this lesson time choosing a pitch for each of their selected states and transferring their state rhythm composition to a pitched composition. If multiple computers are available, use Finale Notepad (a free download from makemusic.com) and the template included with these plans). If you would like this project to be completely non-digital, use the Word or PDF template. At some point during the student work time demonstrate to all students how to add the names of their states under each beat on the music staff.*

3. *As students indicate they have completed their project, have each of them use the “StatesSelf-Assess” worksheet to check themselves. (If using the hard copy version of this lesson, the self-assessment could be printed on the back of the composition template.)*

4. *Reflection: Have all students stand and sing “Fifty Nifty United States” as much from memory as possible to bring closure to this lesson.*

Indicators of success: *Students have met the objectives of this project if they can accurately answer “Yes” to 6 or more of the Self-Assess criteria. Positive responses in completing the reflection starter at the bottom of the Self-Assess Worksheet are also an indicator of success.*

Supplementary Information: *This step in the “Great States” composition project can be completed in either a digital or hard copy version. Using a software notation program is recommended because students can immediately hear what they’ve written which will aid in them being able to perform it themselves. I have done this project with both pitched and unpitched instruments. The above directions are for students who have already learned the pitches B-A-G-E-D on the recorder. When using only classroom percussion, students are asked to place each state on a different line or space and if in Finale, the template has been set to use percussion sounds.*

Lesson Plan Title: "Playing Our Pieces"

Lesson Plan # 4 of 4 plans

This plan describes a SINGLE CLASS PERIOD of 30 minutes.

Objectives of this Lesson Plan: *Students will complete their State Project if they did not do so in the previous lesson and then practice what they have written in order to perform it for the teacher or their classmates.*

Materials used: *Classroom percussion, Orff instruments, keyboards or student recorders, PerformanceRubric form (optional)*

Prior Knowledge and Experiences/Curriculum Content: *Students have experience playing the instrument on which they will be performing their "Eight Great States" composition. Students have completed their composition or will complete it during this lesson.*

Procedures:

1. *Introduction: Sing "Fifty Nifty United States" asking students to stand each time they sing one of the states that they included in their States Song Project. (They'll need to have at least their StatesProject worksheet in front of them to do this successfully!)*

2. *Use a mock composition or a completed student composition to walk students through the States Self-Assess worksheet so that they are clear about what the expectations are in order for them to be successfully finished.*

3. *Allow time for students to complete their composition and/or practice it. As students are working, the teacher can be assisting in the completing the compositions or in practicing their playing.*

4. *Depending upon the specific teacher's classroom environment, all students might be asked to perform their composition in front of the class with teacher and/or student positive feedback. Students may wish to record themselves performing their piece at home (They could use either of these free programs: Macintosh--Audio Recorder or Windows—Sound Recorder.) and then submit this digitally to their teacher. If your teaching space allows, students could move individually to a practice room and record their performance while the rest of the students are working,*

5. *Reflection: Have volunteers perform their "Eight Great States" song for the class. If completed digitally, the score might be projected on a screen for the class to view as it is being performed. If time allows, invite all students to perform the composition(s).*

Indicators of success: *All students should be able to accurately speak their composition with the correct rhythm and with a steady beat. It is expected that many will also be able to perform their piece as well on another instrument.*

Supplementary Information: *The teacher may choose to additionally assess the student's performance of their composition or perhaps one or two excellent compositions might be duplicated (with the student's permission) for all students in the classroom to practice and perform. Print the composition to be performed on the top of the PerformanceRubric form.*