

discord: *from dissonance to resolution*

LESSON FOR GRADES 6-12

OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand and utilize, in their own writing, the concept of antithesis.
- Students will learn about the different types of music used during the Civil Rights Movement.

STANDARDS

- National Music Standard 6: Listening to, analyzing and describing music
- National Music Standard 9: Understanding music in relation to history and culture
- National Language Arts Standard 6: Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
- National Language Arts Standard 1: Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

MATERIALS

- *Voices: Reflections on an American Icon through Words and Song* book
- *Voices: Reflections on an American Icon through Words and Song* CD
- CD Player
- Copies of the “Spirituals” p. 5 and “Gospel Music” p. 7 selections from the **Student Readings** section for each student
- Copies of the Venn-diagram worksheet p. 70 from the **Worksheet** section for each student

APPROXIMATE LENGTH

- Three 90 minute sessions

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- The students can identify Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- The students are familiar with information about the Civil Rights Movement.
- The students have listened to and described music in their own words.
- The students have written free verse poetry.

discord:

from dissonance to resolution

FOCUS AND REVIEW

- Complete the timeline for this portion of the book (see **Timeline Activity**) p. 19.
- From the “Discord” section of the *Voices* book: Read selected quotes, show selected pictures, have the students read selected quotes aloud, or have the students read the entire section. (Selections should be made at the teacher’s discretion.)

PROCEDURES

SESSION 1:

1. Review with the students the material previously learned about the Civil Rights Movement.
2. Talk about the meaning of the word “discord.” Discuss the discord of the Civil Rights Movement.
3. Review with the students the concept of segregation by reading them some of the quotes from the “Discord” section of the book and showing the students pictures from the book.
4. Introduce the students to the music of the movement by having them read “Spirituals” and “Gospel Music” from the **Student Readings** section.
5. After the students have read the “Spirituals” reading, play track 7 “Deep River” and track 5 “I Know I’ve Been Changed” from the *Voices* CD. See if the students can pick out the characteristics of spirituals described in the reading by listening to these tracks. Track 5 is a good example of call and response technique.
6. After the students have read the “Gospel Music” reading, play track 1 “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” track 10 “Blessed Assurance,” and track 14 “Rock-a My Soul.”
7. As the students listen to these tracks you can have them create a list of words describing each song, have them take notes on how the music makes them feel and/or have them compare and contrast individual musical selections. In the **Worksheets** Section there is a Venn-diagram worksheet that you can use for any comparing and contrasting exercise.

SESSION 2:

8. Return the students’ attention to the fact that spirituals grew out of slavery and that gospel music was utilized during a time of extreme oppression. Have the students read the introduction to the “Discord” section of the *Voices* book on page 8. Lead a class discussion about the contrast between the upbeat, positive nature of the music and the oppression and difficulty of the historical context.
9. Have the students complete the Venn-Diagram worksheet in the **Worksheet Section** comparing and contrasting the music used during the movement (spirituals and gospel) and what they know historically about the movement itself.
10. After the students have completed their worksheets, discuss with the students how these two things seem much like opposites, but opposites that compliment or aid one another.
11. Introduce the students to the word “antithesis”. Define or have the students define the word. Explain to the students that in poetry, and other forms of writing, an antithesis is a rhetorical contrast of ideas by means of parallel arrangements of words, clauses or sentences. Give the students the example by Alexander Pope - “To err is human, forgive divine.”

discord:

from dissonance to resolution

- a. **For Grade 9-12 Students:** Point out to the students the antithetical statement on page 23 of the *Voices* book – King’s favorite quote by Mahatma Gandhi – “In the midst of death, life persists. In the midst of darkness, light persists.” Have the students discuss the meaning of this statement. Also have the students discuss the effectiveness of this statement in creating imagery for the reader.
12. Pull out the statements from the book containing red text on page 7 and page 73. Have the students discuss the significance of the words in red. Ask the students questions like:
 - a. What is the significance of the words in red?
 - b. Why do you think the publisher of the book wanted to draw attention to those words?
 - c. What effect does the use of the red words have on the reader?
 - d. What do the words in red have in common?
13. Point out to the students that several of the words in these two statements are opposites.
14. Have the students reread these statements in light of what they have learned about antithetical statements. Ask the students if the use of opposites in the statements makes the statements have a more powerful meaning and/or impact.
15. Divide the students into small groups and have each group write an antithetical statement using information they have learned thus far or information they already know about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or the Civil Rights Movement in general.

SESSION 3:

16. Have the groups share these statements with the class. Lead the other groups in discussing the statements of the group that is sharing.
17. Have the students write a free verse poem about the Civil Rights Movement (the individual teacher can set the parameters for the assignment) in which they utilize their understanding of antithetical statements. The students should try to create their own antithetical statements and use them in the poetry.
18. Return to the music that the students listened to earlier in the lesson. Do the students see a connection between the power of antithetical poetic statements and the power of music that is in stark contrast to the mood and emotions of the people using the music?
19. Have the students complete a journal entry/reflective writing assignment discussing the above question.

EVALUATION

- Individual participation in/contributions to group discussions
- Individual poetic compositions
- Individual completion of the Venn-diagram worksheet
- Individual completion of the journal entry

discord: *from dissonance to resolution*

EXTENSIONS

- **Creative Writing Extension:** Have the students revise their poems using feedback from classmates and the teacher. Once the students have finalized their poems, create a class poetry book or other means for displaying the students' work.
- **Language Arts Extension:** Have the students read examples of work containing antithetical statements used to strengthen the imagery of the work. Choose from works by Alexander Pope, Edward Gibbon and Samuel Johnson who often use antithesis in their work.
- **Extension for Grades 9-12 Students:** Have the students write a reflective essay about what Gandhi was trying to say in the quote used in the lesson (page 23 of the *Voices* book) and why the students think that this was Dr. King's favorite quote by Gandhi.
- **Musical Extension 1:** Have the students conduct their own research to learn more about spirituals and gospel music.
- **Musical Extension 2:** Borrow sheet music from the music teacher or ask the music teacher to teach the students to sing "Lift Every Voice and Sing."
- **Musical Extension 3:** Assign the students the readings from the **Portraits of Composers** section p. 11 so that they can learn more about the composers who composed some of the most prominent music of the movement.
- **Social Studies Extension:** Have the students conduct research to learn about Mahatma Gandhi and his principals of non-violence to which Dr. King ascribed.

discord: from dissonance to resolution

TEACHER'S NOTES:
