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# Lesson Plan: Finding the Beat - Where Poems and Songs Meet

## Materials Needed:

- Notebook or journal
- Pens or pencils
- Large sheet of paper or whiteboard for a Venn diagram
- Markers
- A device with internet access (for playing music)
- Headphones (optional)
- Printed lyrics to a chosen song (e.g., "How Far I'll Go" from *Moana*)
- Printed copy of a chosen poem (e.g., "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost)
- Optional: Simple household items for making sounds (e.g., a jar of rice, rubber bands, tapping on a desk, snapping fingers) OR a simple music creation app like GarageBand.

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## Lesson Details

**Subject:** Language Arts, Music, Creative Expression

**Grade Level:** Approximately 6th Grade (Age 11)

**Unit Theme:** How We Express Ourselves: Poetry & Music

**Week:** 1 of 4

**Big Idea for Today:** Poetry and music are powerful partners that use many of the same tools—like rhythm, mood, and imagery—to tell stories and share feelings.

### 1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Identify at least three common elements shared by poetry and song lyrics (e.g., rhythm, rhyme, imagery, figurative language).
- Compare and contrast the structure and emotional impact of a selected poem and a song.
- Create a short, original poem and pair it with a simple, mood-matching soundscape.

### 2. Lesson Activities (Approx. 60-75 minutes)

#### Part A: Warm-Up - The Power of Sound (10 minutes)

1. **Listen to Music:** Play a short, instrumental piece of music without any words (e.g., the main theme from *Star Wars* or a calm piece of classical music). Ask the student: "If this music was a feeling, what would it be? If it was a color, what color? Write down 3-5 words that come to mind."
2. **Listen to Poetry:** Read a short, expressive poem aloud (like Shel Silverstein's "Listen to the Mustn'ts"). Ask the same questions: "What feeling does this poem give you? What color comes to mind? Write down 3-5 words."
3. **Discuss:** Talk about the words the student chose for each. Ask: "Even though one had no

words and one was only words, did they both create a mood? How?" This introduces the idea that both mediums are experts at creating feeling.

### Part B: Instruction & Exploration - The Poet's and Musician's Toolbox (15 minutes)

1. **Create a Venn Diagram:** On a large sheet of paper or a whiteboard, draw two overlapping circles. Label one "Poetry" and the other "Song Lyrics."
2. **Brainstorm Together:** Ask the student, "What do you think is unique to a poem? What is unique to a song?" Place these ideas in the outer circles (e.g., "Musical instruments" might go in the Song Lyrics circle; "Stanzas" might go in Poetry).
3. **Find the Overlap:** Now, focus on the middle, shared section. Guide the discussion to fill this area with the tools they both use. Prompt with questions like:
  - "Do they both have a beat or a pulse?" (**Rhythm**)
  - "Do they often use words that sound alike?" (**Rhyme**)
  - "Do they paint pictures in your mind?" (**Imagery**)
  - "Do they sometimes say one thing but mean another, like 'the world is a stage'?" (**Figurative Language: Metaphors/Similes**)
  - "Do they both try to make you feel something?" (**Mood/Tone**)

### Part C: Guided Practice - Literary Detectives (20 minutes)

1. **Set the Scene:** Tell the student they are now a "Literary Detective." Their mission is to find evidence of the tools from the middle of the Venn diagram.
2. **Analyze the Song:** Give the student the printed lyrics to "How Far I'll Go." Play the song while they read along. Ask them to use a marker to highlight or underline examples of rhythm (strong beats), rhyme, imagery (e.g., "where the sky meets the sea"), and any metaphors they can find. Discuss their findings together.
3. **Analyze the Poem:** Now, provide the copy of "The Road Not Taken." Read it aloud together expressively. Have the student use a different colored marker to do the same thing: find the rhythm, rhyme scheme, imagery ("yellow wood"), and the central metaphor (the roads representing life choices).
4. **Compare Notes:** Ask: "How was the metaphor in the song different from the one in the poem? Which one felt like it had a faster rhythm? Why do you think that is?"

### Part D: Creative Task - Mood Music Mash-Up (20 minutes)

1. **The Challenge:** Announce the main creative task. The student will become both a poet and a composer!
2. **Step 1 - Choose a Mood:** Ask the student to pick a single, strong emotion or mood (e.g., Mysterious, Joyful, Lonely, Energetic).
3. **Step 2 - Write a Poem:** The student will write a short poem (4 to 8 lines) that captures this mood. Remind them to think about imagery—what does "lonely" look like? What does "energetic" sound like?
4. **Step 3 - Create a Soundtrack:** Using household items or a simple app, the student will create a simple "beat" or "soundscape" to be performed behind the poem. The sounds should match the mood.
  - **Example for "Mysterious":** A slow, soft tapping on a book, the gentle rustle of paper.
  - **Example for "Energetic":** Fast-paced snapping, shaking a jar of rice, quick taps with a pen on a desk.
5. **Step 4 - Perform!:** Have the student perform their poem by reading it aloud over their created soundtrack.

### 3. Wrap-Up & Connection to Culminating Event (5 minutes)

- **Share and Reflect:** After the performance, give positive feedback! Ask: "How did adding the sounds change the feeling of your words? What was your favorite part of creating that?"

- **Look Ahead:** Explain, "This was our first step in exploring how words and music work together. Over the next three weeks, we'll learn more techniques. Our final goal is for you to create a polished performance piece—like a full song, a poem set to music you find or create, or a spoken word piece. Your Mood Music Mash-up is the very first draft of that amazing final project!"

#### 4. Differentiation and Inclusivity

- **For Extra Support:** Provide a list of "mood words" to choose from. Offer sentence starters for the poem, such as "I feel [mood] when..." or "The world seems [mood] because..." You can also suggest specific sounds for their chosen mood.
- **For an Extra Challenge:** Ask the student to write their poem following a specific rhyme scheme (like AABB or ABAB). Challenge them to use at least one simile or metaphor in their poem. For the soundtrack, they could try creating two distinct rhythmic patterns that alternate.

#### 5. Assessment (Formative)

- Observe the student's participation in the Venn diagram discussion to check for initial understanding.
- Review their highlighted findings in the song and poem to see if they can identify the target literary elements.
- The primary assessment is the "Mood Music Mash-up." Evaluate it based on:
  - **Clarity of Mood:** Does the poem clearly convey the chosen emotion?
  - **Creative Connection:** Do the chosen sounds effectively enhance the mood of the poem?
  - **Effort and Application:** Did the student thoughtfully apply the concepts of rhythm and mood from the lesson into their own creative work?

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