



Lesson: Interviewing Composers

STANDARDS: California

Chronological and Spatial Thinking

1. Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.
2. Students analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics but also values and beliefs.

Historical Interpretation

1. Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.
2. Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitations on determining cause and effect.
3. Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.

Speaking Applications (Genres and their Characteristics)

- 2.3 Apply appropriate interviewing techniques:
- a. Prepare and ask relevant questions.
 - b. Make notes of responses.
 - c. Use language that conveys maturity, sensitivity, and respect.
 - d. Respond correctly and effectively to questions.
 - e. Demonstrate knowledge of the subject or organization.
 - f. Compile and report responses.
 - g. Evaluate the effectiveness of the interview.

Social Studies: Historical and Social Science Analysis

Motivation: Ask students to describe a successful [interview](#). What does the interviewer do beforehand? What does the interviewee do before hand? What does the interview itself look like? What happens after the interview?

Group Activity: Watch any of the presentations about composers, including *About Debussy*, *About George Gershwin*, *About Rimsky-Korsakov*, and *About Stravinsky* in *At the Piano with Alan Gampel*. Ask students what they know about the time periods during which these composers lived. Then watch the performance of the piece the composer



wrote. Ask students what this reveals about the composer's personality. What can you tell about them from the music? What would you ask them if you ever met them?

Independent Activity: Allow students to thoroughly explore all the musical sections of the Joy2Learn website, including *Jazz*, *Dancing*, and *At the Piano*. Each student should pick two composers or musicians. Once students submit their choices, teachers should assign students two roles: an interviewer role and an interviewee role. For example, suppose a student was assigned Claude Debussy and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. The teacher should specify that the student is *interviewing* Debussy and *playing* Rimsky-Korsakov *in an interview* or vice versa. Discuss how students will prepare differently for each role. What do students need to know about the composer to ask intelligent questions? What do students need to know about the composer to answer questions the way the composer might have answered them?

Teachers may choose to allow students who are researching the same composer to work together. Or, they may choose to make the interview itself a surprise, which may be more authentic. Do the interviews in front of the class, or have students tape the interviews and bring them into class for viewing. Students can wear costumes and bring props if they wish. Encourage students to incorporate the composers' compositions into the interview. Discuss what students can do to make the interview as accurate as possible.

Evaluation: Ask students what they found challenging as an interviewer and what they found challenging as an interviewee. How were these interviews similar to interviews students will have to do in the future? How were these interviews different? What would they change if they could do the activity over again? Remind students they may be interviewers as well as interviewees for their future jobs. How would they apply what they learned in this exercise to their future?