

YANKEE DOODLE: Some “dandy” lessons!

Framework

- Grade: Adaptable (K – 4)
- Topic: A familiar and favorite tune
- Focus: Getting to know *Yankee Doodle*
- National Learning Standard:

No. 1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.

No. 4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.

No. 6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.

No. 8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.

No. 9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Materials

- Curriculum CD/ CD Player
- Lesson guide
- Recording of *Yankee Doodle*

Resource Materials

- <http://ingeb.org/songs/yankeedo.html>
- While the text is not applicable, there is a Media Player version of the melody for listening or accompaniment. It is cute (in a rather computerized version)
- <http://www.kididdles.com/mouseum/y004.html>

Introduction

Students will have the opportunity to hear a famous rendition of *Yankee Doodle*, an arrangement created by Morton Gould. This is a unique opportunity to hear this American favorite! The lessons below are designed to bring some familiarity to the tune.

Process & Activities

Step One: Singing *Yankee Doodle**

This is a familiar and famous tune. Singing this tune is one important and meaningful way for children to become more keenly aware of the melody, the text, and the meaning.

*See **YANKEE DOODLE TEXT HANDOUT**

Step Two: Getting to know the *rhythm* of the song.

Teachers: The tune has a very distinct rhythm and rhythm pattern. Utilizing a variety of instruments such as rhythm sticks, hand clapping, gentle thigh-top thumping, and other creativity sound-making techniques, student's can re-create the tune's rhythm.

The goal of this activity is for students to become aware of the tune's rhythm without attention to the words. While you may begin the activity with the children clapping along as they sing, for example, the ultimate outcome is for them—in groups or individually—to perform the rhythm of the tune without reliance upon the text.

Activities!

Option One: Clapping (and alternatives) to Yankee Doodle melody

Option Two: Can you guess the tune?

Teachers: Have students work in pairs. One student selects a familiar melody—perhaps a song they know from music class instruction—and direct them to clap or tap the rhythm to the tune (as done above). Example: America (My Country 'tis of Thee) or Happy Birthday. Have the alternate student “guess” the tune/title. Alternate roles.

Step Three: New text – Be creative!

Teachers: As you know, children are quite proficient at creating new words for familiar songs. Using the Yankee Doodle melody and rhythm, have students create new words that match. To assist in providing a framework, pick topics for their creativity.

For example, if the topic were animals, a child can create text focused on the animal of their choice. Imagine the following text sung to the Yankee Doodle tune:

<p>A big, old panther came around And smiled a happy smile He looked right at me, laughed and laughed And stayed for quite a while!</p>

Students: Using the same melody and rhythm of Yankee Doodle, create your own words. Use a topic like animals, weather, sports, or geography.

Step Four: Fast Fact!

"He stuck a feather in his cap and called it Macaroni"

This portion of the song refers to a cap with a chicken feather for decoration. The term "Macaroni" was a reference to an Italian designer—a sign of elegance and wealth. The Macaroni family of Italy were among the "World's Best Dressed" of European nobility in the late 18th century.

However, the original song was not one of admiration. Rather, the song was created to belittle American's during the time of the American Revolution:

"The song describes a typical American, a "Yankee Doodle", riding on a pathetic little pony, who fancies himself a "dandy". To attract the ladies, he sticks a feather in his cap and calls it "Macaroni."

Step Five: Draw It! The hat was an elegant, multi-feathered hat with plumed feathers—large and noticeable. Can you draw such a hat?

