Sing Me a Song

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OBJECTIVE

The students will understand the practices of singing in theatrical performances and apply it to learn a song from a musical.

VOCABULARY

1. Diaphragm- The muscle below the ribs that expands out and down causing air to enter the lungs.
2. Breath Support- The breath you take supports the sound and makes it strong. Without sufficient breath the voice won't carry. Breath is supported by a large muscle under the ribcage called the diaphragm .
3. Tempo- The speed at which a passage of music is or should be played.
4. Pitch- The quality of a sound governed by the rate of vibrations producing it; the degree of highness or lowness of a tone.
5. Tone- A particular quality, way of sounding, modulation, or intonation of the voice as expressive of some meaning, feeling, spirit, etc.
6. Melody- A sequence of single notes that is musically satisfying; the principal part in harmonized music.
7. Resonance- Vibrations that create tone through and within your mouth, throat, and nasal passages.
8. Lyrics-the words of a song.

TEKS

§117.315. (2) Creative expression: performance. The student interprets characters using the voice and body expressively and creates dramatizations. The student is expected to:

(D) develop and practice effective voice and diction to express thoughts and feelings

§117.319. (2) Creative expression: performance. The student interprets characters through acting, singing, and dance using voice and body expressively and creates dramatizations called for in a musical script. The student is expected to:

(D) identify proper voice usage and correct vocal production skills such as vocal placement, vocal phrasing, vocal tone production, and vocal consistency in a performance situation

§117.319. (4) Historical and cultural relevance. The student relates musical theatre to history, society, and culture. The student is expected to:

(A) study historical and cultural influences on musical theatre

MATERIALS NEEDED

For the Teacher:

1. Computer
2. TV Screen or Projector
3. Piano or Pitch Maker

CHECK-IN

1. Check-In

WARM UPS

1. 8 Count Shake Out
    a. The students will shake their right hand, then left hand, then right foot, then left foot. This will begin in increments of 8, then 4, then 2, and lastly, 1 count for each.
2. To Sit In Solemn Silence
    a. This warm up focuses on the voice, so make sure the students practice this with proper enunciation and diction. This can be broken up by lines in call and response, or it can be said all together.

        To sit in solemn silence in a dull, dark dock,
        In a pestilential prison, with a lifelong lock,
        Awaiting the sensation of a short, sharp shock,
        From a cheap and chippy chopper on a big black block!
3. Mommy Made Me Mash My M&M's
    a. This singing warm up goes up and down a 5 note scale to the words "mommy made me mash my M&M's." After going up and down the scale, the first note gets higher in pitch.

        Video Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ggrmfvr8ovY

ACTIVITY I

Title: The History of Music on the Stage

Description: This activity will provide students with a brief history of musical theatre performance. For this activity, the instructor will show the students a Crash Course video that provides information on the history of musical theatre. Have the students take notes on some of the key points made in the video and discuss with them after what they recognized from their prior knowledge, and what new information they learned.
Link to Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kxzD4ASioI

ACTIVITY II

Title: Before We Sing, We Have to Breathe

Description: This activity focuses on the fundamental aspects of using your voice when performing on a stage. The instructor will explain that when using the voice on stage, it is most important to have good techniques in order to avoid damaging the voice. This is especially important when singing. The instructor will then explain to the class that the most important fundamental part of singing is in the breath you take. Breath control is very important because not only do we need the air to produce sound, but using it wisely and accurately can lead to a better performance and better singing. Next, show the students how to take proper breaths when performing on stage. Explain that the biggest and most supported breath we can take is from our diaphragm. Show the kids the difference between breathing with and without the diaphragm. Then ask the students to place their hands on their upper stomachs and feel their diaphragms expand and shrink as they breathe. This can be followed up by some different breathing exercises. One example is breathing in for 4 counts, holding for 8 counts, and then exhaling on a hiss for 4 counts. The length of the hold can change to 12, 16, and even 20.

ACTIVITY III

Title: I Dreamed a Dream

Description: The students will now take some time to learn a song from a musical. For this lesson, the song chosen is I Dreamed a Dream from Les Miserables. This song was chosen because understanding that students may have little to no background in music, the melody of this song is simple and repeated throughout the song. First show the students a performance of this song, so they can begin to become familiar with it.

Link to Performance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYjQduehTpM

Once the students have seen the video, distribute copies of lyrics so they can follow along with the words. They will not need to memorize them for this assignment, but knowing the words will help to move into connecting them with a melody.

Link to Lyrics: https://www.allmusicals.com/lyrics/lesmiserables/idreamedadream.htm

Have the students follow along with the words as you play the video again. Once they have watched the video with the lyrics in hand as they follow along, break the song down into verses and have the students sing with the video first, then a capella, then with the video once more. Do this for every verse in the song, then once the class has sung through all the verses separately, play the performance again, but only loud enough for the students to follow along with. Now would be an ideal time for a short water break/vocal break since they have been singing for a while. During this break you can ask the students what parts of the song they may need help figuring out, or if they have any other questions regarding the song.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (RECOMMEND 10 MINUTES)

Title: Performance

When the break is over, stage a mini performance of the song. Try to arrange the students in groups so you can assign different groups to different verses in the song. For instance,

- Verse 1: Group A
- Verse 2: Group B
- Final Verse: Everyone

You may even ask for volunteers for anyone who would like to begin the song as a solo. The arrangement of the group may vary depending on the size of class, and ultimately, the class can sing the entire song together if groups may not work out. Once the arrangement has been sorted out, "perform" the song for each other using an accompaniment track.

Link to Accompaniment: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruviSIVo-TM

CIRCLE TIME (10 MINUTES)

Title: Circle Time

- Description: Students will discuss with each other what they learned through today's lesson. Some questions you can ask them are:
  - What parts did you enjoy most about learning a new song?
  - Did you like the song? Why or why not?
  - Have you seen a musical before? If not, would you go see a musical?

END OF DAY/SIGN-OFF