



**Jammin'**  
*Poetry about  
making music  
or enjoying the  
experience of  
listening to  
music*



**Poetry Lesson Plan for High School Students**

**Subject areas addressed:** Creative writing, and music

**Objectives:**

- Use poetry to convey the experience of making music (with an instrument or voice), or to describe the experience of listening to favorite music.
- Write poetry that's so descriptive the reader knows what instruments are creating the music or what group/artist is performing without the name in the content of the poem itself.

**Activities:**

- Begin by asking students whether they play an instrument or are singers. Continue this conversation by asking how long they've been making music, which instruments they can play, whether they've taken lessons and performances they have been in.
- If there are students in your classroom who have not been engaged in making music, steer the discussion so they can share their thoughts on what it feels like to listen to music.
- Percussion, often at loud volume, is a favorite topic for many high school students. It can be a great place to start the discussion about how it feels to play percussion instruments or listen to eardrum-splitting percussion on car speakers. Include questions here about how music affects their mood and their favorite types of music to listen to at different hours of the day.
- If you wish to approach this poetry writing assignment in a straightforward way, ask your students to write a poem that describes the feelings they have when making music or playing recorded music. Caution them not to lift lyrics from favorite songs and underscore the need to stay away from plagiarism.
- A more challenging assignment is to write a poem that teases the reader. Can the student writers compose a poem that has clues about the instrument or guest artist's music, with no mention of a name?

- Consider writing the names of wind, brass, percussion, string and keyboard instruments on cards and have students draw a card with an instrument to write about. Research into the “assigned” instrument will be required so he or she can accurately write about the sound it makes. The research may include listening to music played on that instrument and discovery of the range of sounds that instrument can make.

### **Procedures and Ideas:**

- If you would like to have an interactive experience in your classroom and have assigned your students to write the poem to give clues about an instrument or musician, have the author read his or her poem. Follow that with other students’ guesses about the instrument or musician featured in the poem. Once guessed, allow the author to play a brief section of a recording with that instrument or artist. This gives an auditory experience that complements the reading of the poem. Be sure you have the volume control in your hand!
- Some of your students who are musicians might enjoy playing a brief bit of music on their instrument or singing a favorite song a capella after they’ve read their poem.
- When your Jammin’ poems are completed, remember that the Anthology of Poetry would love to have them submitted for consideration in our forum for young writers. Visit [www.anthologyofpoetry.com](http://www.anthologyofpoetry.com) for more information, or to electronically submit individual stories.