

Liberty for All: A Musical Journey
U.S. Army Band – The Vision
Lesson 2: Guided Listening
Grades 3 – 6

Objectives:

- Students will be able to aurally identify repetitive text within a musical work.
- Students will discover or reinforce the concept of music as a means of communication.
- Students will complete an “orchestrational analysis” of Thompson’s *The Testament of Freedom* through guided listening questions.

National Standards for Music Education:

6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Materials:

- *Liberty for All: A Musical Journey* CD-ROM featuring the U.S. Army Band
- PC or MAC
- Screen projector to display CD-ROM in class
- CD player
- Pens/pencils
- Student copies of the Guided Listening Worksheet (provided below)

Prior Knowledge:

- Students have a basic understanding of the instruments of the orchestra and/or their primary families.
- Students can aurally identify the instruments or instrument families of the orchestra.
- Students can recognize basic changes in dynamics and tessitura within a musical work.
- Students have listened to musical selections of extended length (5 – 10 minutes).

Procedures:

1. Distribute copies of the Guided Listening Worksheet (below) containing the musical text of Thomas Jefferson and guided listening questions. *[Note: If Lesson 1 has been previously completed, steps 2 and 3 may be skipped.]*
2. Read Thomas Jefferson’s text aloud to students.
3. This work reflects the inspiration of Thomas Jefferson and his impact on the United States. Before listening to the work, what do you think the music will sound like and why? What are your expectations?

4. Begin the *Liberty for All* CD-ROM, click on **The Vision** section; click on **Overview** and have students listen to the narrator or read the description aloud to students (if not previously completed in Lesson 1).
5. Listen to the fourth movement of Randall Thompson's *The Testament of Freedom* (track 2 or click on **Music** in **The Vision** section), completing the guided listening questions. Pause the recording as necessary.
6. Invite students to share their answers for each question and discuss, with the following ideas as options:
 - What instruments are missing? Why do you think the composer, Randall Thompson, chose to only include string instruments? Would other instruments have distracted from the text?
 - What word is frequently repeated throughout the text? Why do you think Thomas Jefferson chose to use the word "liberty" so often? Is this the main subject? If Thomas Jefferson was known as a great communicator, does this help us understand what he wants to say?
 - How would you describe the ending? What adjectives would you use? What words are repeated at the very end? Why do you think the composer chooses to do this?
 - If Jefferson was a great communicator, do you think this music helps convey his ideas? Does music communicate?
7. The composer chooses to emphasize certain key words through repetition. Can you think of any other musical examples where specific words or phrases are repeated? Does this happen in popular music, like in a verse or chorus?
8. Click on **Factoids**; read the first three factoids (**Randall Thompson, Thompson's Symphony No. 2, Frostiana**) aloud to the class. Emphasize to students that composers may collaborate with their contemporaries to compose a work.

Extensions:

- Listen to shorter examples of a variety of styles—popular, folk, classical, etc., and similarly analyze for repetition. This can serve as a gateway exercise to discussing musical form or as a reinforcement activity for previous study.
- Read other speeches (or portions of speeches) by important historical figures, such as Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" or Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream." What words or phrases are repeated throughout? Do they reflect the speaker's primary subject?

Supplemental Resources:

- Additional recordings in a variety of musical styles. These can be generated by the students.
- Additional examples of historical speeches, perhaps in conjunction with concurrent Social Studies units.

This standards-based lesson plan was created by MENC member Barry Long, Music Educator, Mount St. Mary's University, Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Guided Listening Worksheet

Text to the fourth Movement of Randall Thompson's The Testament of Freedom, from a letter from Thomas Jefferson to John Adams in 1821 and A Summary View of the Rights of British America 1774:

"I shall not die without a hope that light and liberty are on steady advance...

And even should the cloud of barbarism and despotism again obscure the science and liberties of Europe,

this country remains to preserve and restore light and liberty to them...

The flames kindled on the 4th of July, 1776, have spread over too much of the globe to be extinguished by the feeble engines of despotism;

on the contrary, they will consume these engines and all who work them.

The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time;

the hand of force may destroy but cannot disjoin them."

Guided Listening Questions

1. What instruments do you hear?
2. Is the beginning simple or complex?
3. What do the instruments do right before the chorus enters?
4. What are the first voices you hear, male or female? Are they high or low?
5. In the space provided, write above the text whether the music is loud or soft. If you feel like it gradually becomes louder or softer, draw a line connecting the words.
6. What is the first line to be repeated in echo by the chorus?
7. When there are no voices, what are the instruments doing? Are they more active?
8. What words are repeated throughout the work?
9. What two words are coupled at different times with 'liberty'?
10. Is there a big finish? Mark on the text where you think it begins.
11. What two words are repeated at the end?

Guided Listening Answers

1. What instruments do you hear? (strings)
2. Is the beginning simple or complex? (simple)
3. What do the instruments do right before the chorus enters? (decrescendo)
4. What are the first voices you hear, male or female? (male) Are they high or low? (low)
5. In the space provided, write above the text whether the music is loud or soft. If you feel like it gradually becomes louder or softer, draw a line connecting the words. (soft ----- loud)
6. What is the first line to be repeated in echo by the chorus? (This country remains to preserve...)
7. When there are no voices, what are the instruments doing? Are they more active? (melodic figures and sustained pitches; less active in the beginning, more active in the middle and end)
8. What words are repeated throughout the work? (light, liberty, despotism)
9. What two words are coupled at different times with 'liberty'? (light, life)
10. Is there a big finish? Mark on the text where you think it begins. (The God who gave us life...)
11. What two words are repeated at the end? (liberty, life)