

In the Mood

The movie experience, which employs both auditory and visual stimulation, is a classic example of how powerful events can be recreated to provoke strong emotional responses. When the emotions are stirred in the right way, a movie can create an atmosphere in which people are more willing to take action. By using GarageBand and iMovie HD to create a movie project, students are able to more fully understand and appreciate the significance of events, past and present, that have an impact on the human experience.

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Grade level: Middle School

Curriculum areas: Language Arts, Music

Project Overview

In this project, students read and then analyze a piece of historical fiction. They work in small groups to create original artworks that embody the mood of selected parts of the novel. Students use the artwork in an iMovie HD project and add a retelling of the story in their own words for narration of their movie. They use GarageBand to create a soundtrack that reflects the mood of the story, and then they share their movie with the whole class.

Project Steps

- 1 To develop a context, lead a class discussion on the following topics:
 - What are the students' reading habits and preferences? Ask them to share titles of stories they have read. Why do we read? (To be entertained? To learn?)
 - What kinds of things can be learned from reading novels? (Understanding how people form and conduct relationships, factual events, experiences)
 - Why is it useful to learn about other people's lives and experiences? (To put our own lives and experiences in context, to learn from other people's experiences, mistakes/successes)

Next, explain to the students that they will be exploring a historical time and place through a novel (historical fiction) and informational materials. Develop a K.T.W. chart with the class (what they Know, Think they know, Want to know) about the time period in the novel. Have them do some research on the questions they generate.

- 2 Have students read and discuss a historical novel, such as *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry. As the students read sections of the novel, have them engage in literature circles to discuss prepared questions on the literary and historical elements of the novel. Include questions about the significance of events portrayed in the novel and the way the author used literary techniques to create a particular tone or mood. Listen in on the group discussions to assess contributions to the discussion based on knowledge of the novel and analysis in relation to the topic questions.
- 3 Divide the students into groups of two to three, and assign a chapter or section of the novel to each group. Explain that they are to select a particular scene from within their assigned section and write about its function, values, and atmosphere. Discuss with the class how images can express moods and emotions through the use of particular colors, hues, and shades of black and white. Then, direct the students to develop and create a picture of the scene they selected from their assigned section in a way that expresses its mood.
- 4 Have student groups scan or photograph the pictures with a digital camera and import the photos into iPhoto and then into an iMovie HD project, ordering them in the same sequence in which they happen in the novel.
- 5 Discuss with the class the developmental stages of the plot from the introduction, through the build-up to the climax, and ending with the conclusion. Have the students rate the tension level of each chapter, and provide an explanation as to what occurred to create the level of tension.
- 6 Next, working in their groups, have the students write a script that retells the story in their own words. They should practice it aloud, paying particular attention to making the expression and tone in their voices express the rise and fall of the tensions and emotions they identified within the plot. When the students have practiced their scripts, they should record their narration into GarageBand to be used as a voiceover for the iMovie HD project.
- 7 Discuss with the class how music is often used in movies to create a particular effect to influence the emotions of the audience, and how most movie soundtracks draw on the broad range of sounds found in symphonic compositions. Play one of the Classical Kids CDs, such as “Vivaldi’s Ring of Mystery” or “Beethoven Lives Upstairs,” pointing out how particular instruments are used to reflect the rise and fall of excitement within the story. Alternatively, you can play theme songs of selected movies and challenge the students to identify the mood the composer was trying to create.
- 8 Using a projection device, display the loops in GarageBand Jam Pack 4: Symphony Orchestra on a screen and play a selection of the loops within the orchestral groupings—strings, woodwinds, percussion, and horns—and talk about the sound qualities of the instruments. Draw attention to the sounds of named loops, such as “Desire” or “Escape.”
- 9 Using GarageBand, have the students work in their groups to create a soundtrack for their script, using the loops to tell the story through music, paying particular attention to the rise and fall of the tensions and emotions they identified in the plot, and matching their composition to the duration of their voiceover. The soundtrack should rise to the climax, and fall off to the resolution, or conclusion. When they have finished the soundtrack, they should export it to iTunes, and import it into iMovie HD to sync with the photos.

- 10 Have the students edit the movie for final presentation.
- 11 Use a projection device and speakers to present the final iMovie HD projects to the whole class.

Outcomes

After completing this project, students will be able to:

- Identify the main ideas or events in literature
- Apply the elements of expression in music compositions
- Identify a variety of purposes for creating music
- Create music for a given purpose
- Create art that reflects the mood of a portion of a fictional work
- Write a script for a movie narration that retells part of a piece of fiction

Technology Skills

After completing this project, students will be able to:

- Use GarageBand to create a musical composition
- Export music created in GarageBand to iTunes
- Use a scanner or digital camera and import images into iPhoto
- Use iMovie HD to creatively present information

Preparation and Duration

Assuming the students have prior knowledge of GarageBand and iMovie HD, this project will require at least 30 hours of time to allow for reading the novel, group discussions, and group work.

Assessment Suggestions

Student work can be assessed using the following criteria:

- 30%: Understanding of literary techniques
- 30%: Understanding of the significance of the historical time period
- 30%: Emotional impact of the presentation
- 10%: Group participation

Tools and Resources

Internet

- <http://www.apple.com/support/garageband/>
GarageBand resources from Apple
- <http://www.apple.com/support/imovie/>
iMovie HD resources from Apple
- <http://www.childrensgroup.com/>
Classical Kids CDs

- <http://www.apple.com/education/garageband/>
GarageBand in the Classroom
- <http://www.apple.com/education/imovie>
iMovie HD in the Classroom

Tools

Macintosh computers, scanner or digital camera, projection device, speakers, GarageBand, iMovie HD, iPhoto, iTunes, GarageBand Jam Pack 4: Symphony Orchestra

Prerequisite Skills

Before beginning this project, students should have experience with the following:

- Creating a composition in GarageBand
- Using GarageBand and exporting a final composition to iTunes
- Using a scanner or digital camera and importing images into iPhoto
- Using iMovie HD, including adding effects and importing music and narration