

# SONGWRITER'S CLUB



ELA &amp; READING



GRADE 1

This guide links the *Songwriter's Club* unit to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for first graders. *Songwriter's Club* is an English language arts and reading (ELAR) unit that allows students to analyze and create song lyrics. *Songwriter's Club* also has interdisciplinary connections to fine arts and social studies disciplines. For example, students will listen to songs to identify language and narrative patterns as outlined in the English Language Arts and Reading TEKS, explore foundational music concepts such as song structure, tone, and rhythm, and learn about events or characters in history and literature as portrayed in songs. The following document includes the applicable TEKS and the details of the *Songwriter's Club* unit. The final section of this document presents the applicable Texas College and Career Readiness Standards adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) on January 24, 2008.

## Description of Unit

In this task, students will study songs and explore song lyrics as storytelling devices. Students will research the songwriting process and songwriters. Students will examine how songs communicate content and emotions. Their learning will culminate in the composition and presentation of original song lyrics that tell a story about their own life.

## Goals

Students will meet these goals in their explorations:

- Identify and practice author craft devices such alliteration, repetition, and rhyme
- Build awareness of song structure
- Analyze songs for narrative content
- Create original stories
- Create song lyrics based on original stories

### *Songwriter's Club* (Grade 1)

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## Phase I. Learning Experiences

1. Read several nursery rhymes and mother goose stories. Ask students what they can say about the selections you have read. What is the same about them? What is different about them? What are they used for?
2. Print out the lyrics of several nursery rhymes. Have students circle the word or words that are the same, put squares around words that start with the same sound, and draw arrows between words that rhyme. Demonstrate first on a projector then let student groups' work on 1-2 additional examples.
3. Create a class name song. Choose a simple familiar song such as *If You Are Happy and You Know It*. Have students clap the rhythm. Use a computer keyboard to play the tune and work with the class to find a way to name every student in the class, using the song tune. ["If you are Amy and you know it, clap your hands...." This can be made fun with each student identifying their own motion, such as stomp feet, wiggle ears or their own funny face with "then your face is gonna show it." Or you can work on another type of song such as *The 12 Rules of Playtime* as appropriate to the class.
4. Play the *Frog Went A-Courting* song. Ask students what they notice about the song [repetition, rhyming]. Listen to the song again and lead the students in clapping the rhythm.
5. Assign groups of 2-3 students' different songs for analysis. Include historical and traditional songs that tell a longer, more complex story. Examples include: the Ballad of Davy Crockett, Frosty the Snowman, Puff the Magic Dragon, When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again. Students should listen to the song several times, then tell the class what the song is about and why they think so. Pass out the lyrics to the class, then play the song for the class having the children follow along. Point out the parts of the song: verse, refrain, chorus and have students identify the patterns/structures (e.g., verse, chorus, versus). Teach the children the chorus to several of the songs and have them sing along.
6. Present a lesson on the writing of the Star-Spangled Banner with images and content about the battle, the poem, and the author.
7. Have students identify a song that they like that tells a story and find out as much as they can about it to either present or sing about to the class.
8. Have students select their favorite song and provide the lyrics to the song. Students are to summarize and explain what the song is about. Students then are to list at least three images in the song. Students are to determine why the song is a popular song?

9. Students will list their favorite songs. Then the class will determine the top ten. Students will develop criteria for songs to be in the top ten. Then the students create a survey for other students to their top ten or what are their favorites.

## Phase II. Independent Research

### A. Research process

1. Selecting a topic for a student story. Stories can be about an important event or person in the student's life, a biographical story, or a dream or wish for the future.
2. Composing a story. Students should draft and polish a story that will serve as the basis for song lyrics. It should include a beginning, middle, and end, and use standard literary conventions as appropriate for the age group.
3. Drawing the story in pictures. Students should draw pictures from the story in frames that present a narrative sequence.
4. Identifying key words. Students should identify the main characters and ideas of the story and write a list of key words. For each of the key story words, students should identify as many rhyming words as possible.
5. Choosing a song to set the lyrics to. Students should sample a range of songs that might be appropriate for telling their story. Their choice should convey the mood of the story if possible.
6. Creating a research proposal for finding out more about the original song the new song will be based on. The student's research should include the original lyrics, in what context the student encountered the song originally, where it came from or what tradition it is linked to, and how it used today.
7. Writing song lyrics. Write a set of lyrics loosely based on the student's story set to the chosen tune.
8. Presenting original lyrics. Practice and present the student's song to the class using either a recording or a live performance, with lyrics provided to the class.
9. Responding to student presentations. Student's write a brief paragraph about each student's song identifying what is was about and how it made them feel and submit to the performer.

### B. The product

Each student develops a story and an original set of song lyrics loosely based on that story.

**C. Communication**

Each student presents the song to the class and other students provide a written response to each performance.

**D. A completed project consists of:**

1. a draft and final personal story, including picture narrative
2. list of key story words and rhymes
3. research on original song
4. original lyrics set to song

**Internet Resources**

- <http://www.rhymes.org.uk/nursery-rhyme.htm>
- <http://www.makingmusicmag.com/forte/build-a-song.html>
- <http://www.theteachersguide.com/ChildrensSongs.htm>
- <http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/games/songs/>
- <http://mag.amazing-kids.org/2010/12/01/writers-tips-how-to-write-song-lyrics/>
- <http://www.kidpanalley.org/>
- <http://www.specialeducationadvisor.com/how-to-write-a-song-for-kids/>
- <http://www.songwritingforkids.com/>
- <http://www.freestockmusic.com/get-started/>
- <http://freemusicarchive.org/>
- <http://www.rhymes.org.uk/chapbooks.htm>
- <http://www.rhymes.org.uk/mother-goose-origins.htm>
- <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/grimm/>

**Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills**

The unit may address the following TEKS:

**English Language Arts and Reading:**

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|------|--|
| 1.1  | Understands how English is written and printed   |
| 1.2  | Displays phonological awareness  |
| 1.4  | Comprehends a variety of texts drawing on useful strategies as needed  |
| 1.7  | Analyzes, makes inferences and draws conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provides evidence from the text to support their understanding |
| 1.8  | Understands, makes inferences and draws conclusions about the structure and elements of poetry and provides evidence from text to support their understanding  |
| 1.13 | Analyzes, makes inferences and draws conclusions about the author's purpose in cultural,   |

- historical, and contemporary contexts and provides evidence from the text to support their understanding
- 1.14 Analyzes, makes inferences and draws conclusions about expository text and provides evidence from text to support their understanding
- 1.16 Uses comprehension skills to analyze how words, images, graphics, and sounds work together in various forms to impact meaning
- 1.17 Uses elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text
- 1.18 Writes literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas
- 1.20 Understands the function of and uses the conventions of academic language when speaking and writing
- 1.24 Determines, locates, and explores the full range of relevant sources addressing a research question and systematically records the information they gather
- 1.26 Organizes and presents their ideas and information according to the purpose of the research and their audience
- 1.27 Uses comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings
- 1.29 Works productively with others in teams

### Social Studies:

- 1.3 Understands the concepts of time and chronology
- 1.15 Understands the importance of family and community beliefs, customs, language, and traditions
- 1.17 Applies critical-thinking skills to organize and uses information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology
- 1.18 Communicates in oral, visual, and written forms
- 1.19 Uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings

### Fine Arts:

#### **Art**

- 1.2 Expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill
- 1.3 Demonstrates an understanding of art history and culture as records of human achievement
- 1.4 Makes informed judgments about personal artworks and the works of others

#### **Music**

- 1.1 Describes and analyzes musical sound and demonstrates musical artistry
- 1.3 Reads and writes music notation
- 1.4 Creates and arranges music within specified guidelines
- 1.5 Relates music to history, to society, and to culture
- 1.6 Responds to and evaluates music and musical performance

## Texas College and Career Readiness Standards

This unit may address the following Texas College and Career Readiness Standards:

### English Language Arts:

- I.A.2 Generates ideas and gathers information relevant to the topic and purpose, keeping careful records of outside sources
- I.A.3 Evaluates relevance, quality, sufficiency, and depth of preliminary ideas and information, organizes material generated, and formulates thesis
- I.A.4 Recognizes the importance of revision as the key to effective writing
- II.A.1 Uses effective reading strategies to determine a written work's purpose and intended audience
- II.A.2 Uses text features and graphics to form an overview of informational texts and to determine where to locate information
- II.A.3 Identifies explicit and implicit textual information including main ideas and author's purpose
- II.A.4 Draws and supports complex inferences from text to summarize, draw conclusions, and distinguish facts from simple assertions and opinions
- II.A.6 Analyzes imagery in literary texts
- II.A.7 Evaluates the use of both literal and figurative language to inform and shape the percepts of readers
- II.A.8 Compares and analyzes how generic features are used across texts
- II.A.10 Identifies and analyzes how an author's use of language appeals to the senses, creates imagery, and suggests mood
- II.A.11 Identifies, analyzes, and evaluates similarities and differences in how multiple texts present information, argue a position, or relate a theme
- II.B.1 Identifies new words and concepts acquired through study of their relationships to other words and concepts
- II.D.1 Describes insights gained about oneself, others, or the world from reading specific texts
- II.D.2 Analyzes the influence of myths, folktales, fables, and classical literature from a variety of world cultures on later literature and film
- III.A.2 Adjusts presentation (delivery, vocabulary, length) to particular audiences and purposes
- III.B.1 Participates actively and effectively in one-on-one oral communication situations
- III.B.2 Participates actively and effectively in group discussions
- IV.A.1 Analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of a public presentation
- IV.B.1 Listens critically and responds appropriately to presentations
- IV.B.2 Listens actively and effectively in one-on-one communication situations
- IV.B.3 Listens actively and effectively in group discussions
- V.A.2 Explores a research topic
- V.A.3 Refines research topic and devises a timeline for completing work
- V.C.1 Designs and presents an effective product

V.C.2 Uses source material ethically

### Science:

I.C.1 Collaborates on joint projects

I.D.1 Demonstrates literacy in computer use

I.D.2 Uses computer models, applications, and simulations

III.B.4 Lists, uses and gives examples of specific strategies before, during, and after reading to improve comprehension

III.D.1 Uses search engines, databases, and other digital electronic tools effectively to locate information

V.C.1 Recognizes patterns of change

### Social Studies:

I.A.3 Analyzes how physical and cultural processes have shaped human communities over time

I.E.2 Defines the concept of socialization and analyzes the role socialization plays in human development and behavior

I.F.1 Uses a variety of research and analytical tools to explore questions or issues thoroughly and fairly

II.A.2 Evaluates the experiences and contributions of diverse groups to multicultural societies

II.B.6 Analyzes how individual and group identities are established and change over time

IV.A.1 Identifies and analyzes the main idea(s) and point(s) of view in sources

IV.A.2 Situates an informational source in its appropriate contexts

IV.A.3 Evaluates sources from multiple perspectives

IV.A.5 Reads narrative texts critically

IV.B.4 Identifies and collects sources

IV.C.1 Understands/interprets presentations critically

V.A.1 Uses appropriate oral communication techniques depending on the context or nature of the interaction

V.A.2 Uses conventions of standard written English

V.B.1 Attributes ideas and information to source materials and authors

### Cross-Disciplinary Standards:

I.A.1 Engages in scholarly inquiry and dialogue

I.A.2 Accepts constructive criticism and revises personal views when valid evidence warrants

I.D.1 Self-monitors learning needs and seeks assistance when needed

I.D.2 Uses study habits necessary to manage academic pursuits and requirements

I.D.4 Perseveres to complete and master tasks

I.E.1 Works independently

I.E.2 Works collaboratively

I.F.1 Attributes ideas and information to source materials and people

I.F.2 Evaluates sources for quality of content, validity, credibility, and relevance

- II.A.3 Identifies the intended purpose and audience of the text
- II.A.4 Identifies the key information and supporting details
- II.A.5 Analyzes textual information critically
- II.A.6 Annotates, summarizes, paraphrases, and outlines texts when appropriate
- II.A.7 Adapts reading strategies according to structure of texts
- II.A.8 Connects reading to historical and current events and personal interest
- II.B.1 Writes clearly and coherently using standard writing conventions
- II.B.3 Composes and revises drafts
- II.C.2 Explores a research topic
- II.C.3 Refines research topic based on preliminary research and devises a timeline for completing work
- II.C.6 Designs and presents an effective product
- II.C.7 Integrates source material
- II.C.8 Presents final product
- II.D.1 Identifies patterns or departures from patterns among data
- II.E.1 Uses technology to gather information
- II.E.4 Uses technology appropriately