

Elementary 4

Ukulele Popularity Contest

Dr. Sarah Gulish

Grade Level/Class

Lower Elementary Grades
30 Minute Music Class

Overall Theme

Just as musical genres and styles shift in and out of the popular spotlight, instruments move with them.

Essential Questions

1. How has the ukulele evolved throughout music history?
2. How has the banjo evolved throughout music history?
3. What factors influenced the shifts in popularity of the ukulele and the banjo in recent history?
4. How do the physical changes of these instruments, if any, connect to the evolution of musical genres and styles?

National Standards

Respond

Mu.Re7.1.K-2: Explain and demonstrate how personal interests and experiences influence musical selection for specific purposes.

Mu.Re9.1.K-2: Apply personal and expressive preferences in the evaluation of music for specific purposes.

Connect

Mu.Con11.1.K-2: Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe the ukulele.
2. Define the word "popular."
3. Analyze the physical changes in the ukulele throughout time.
4. Listen to and evaluate two contrasting ukulele performances.

Materials Needed

1. E4 Presentation
2. E4 Worksheet
3. Colored pencils or crayons

Procedures

Lesson Introduction (5 Min):

- Teacher (T) shows the pictures of the Museum ukuleles in Google Slides and asks students (S) to respond to the following:
 - *“Do you know what this instrument is called? Has anyone ever played one of these before?”*
- T tells S that today they will be learning about the ukulele and about what makes musical instruments “popular.”
- T invites S to raise their hand and share every difference they spot between the ukuleles on the screen (for example, the sizes are different, the shapes are different, etc.)

Lesson Activity (15 Min):

- T shares some general ukulele characteristics:
 - Number of strings/Types of strings
 - Sizes and shapes of the bodies
 - Acoustic and Electric version
- T invites S to raise their hand and share every difference they spot between the ukuleles on the screen (for example, the sizes are different, the shapes are different, etc.).
- Using the slideshow, the T shares the video about the ukulele and how it has had big ups and downs in popularity.
- T defines the term “popular” for S and asks them to raise their hand and identify instruments that they think are popular today.
- T invites S to share about instruments they may have seen or heard in the past that are less popular today.
- T plays two contrasting ukulele performance videos (Taimane and James Hill) T for S and invites them to describe the instrument and the sound.
- After each video, T invites S to share their observations.

Assessment Strategies

Wrap-up and Assessment (10 Min):

- T explains that S will be designing their “dream ukulele” for the class gallery. Using colored pencils and/or crayons, students will design and draw a ukulele and answer the question, *“How will this sound?”* At the bottom of the page.
- While S designs, T moves throughout the room, asking students about their designs and what they learned about the ukulele.
- At the end of the class, T collects images and makes a plan for displaying them.

Extensions/Adaptations

This Lesson Plan works well with other disciplines:

- Visual Arts: Create sculptures out of model magic to bring ukulele designs to life.

- Science: Experiment with varying sizes of ukuleles, having students identify how the length and size of strings affect pitch.
- Entrepreneurship: Invite students to “pitch” their ukulele to the rest of the class (young students will need additional guidance for this), outlining the strengths of their instrument and why they believe it should be the “most popular.”

Adaptations

- Consider providing simplified questionnaires with visual aids for ELL students.
- Provide alternative assignment options for students with fine motor skill considerations. For example, they could dictate answers or draw on a tablet.
- Provide a visual example of the word “popular.”
- Provide a word list under the blank paper for students to circle words they feel describe the instrument or sound. This can also be done with images.
- Provide a word bank to help students answer, “How will this sound?”
- Provide adapted paper (lined paper) for students to focus on writing in one area of the blank paper.

Spotlight on Careers in Music

This lesson plan can be tied to specific careers in music:

- Musician
- Instrument Maker
- Videographer
- Music store owner/Retailer
- Artist
- Composer

For comprehensive information on careers in the music industry, please visit [Consider a Career in Music](#)