

Secondary 9

MIDI: Controlling the Sound

Benjamin Taylor

Grade Level/Class

Lower Secondary Grades
50 Minute Music Class

Overall Theme

This lesson is centered on the development of MIDI and how students can use MIDI technology today in the creation of original music.

Essential Questions

3. What is MIDI?
2. How is MIDI used in music making?
3. How can students use MIDI today to create their own music?

National Standards

Create

MU:Cr1.1.6.a - Generate simple rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic phrases within AB and ABA forms that convey expressive intent.

Student Learning Outcomes

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

1. Define MIDI
2. Describe examples of uses of MIDI in music production today
3. Create original music using an online MIDI sequencer
4. Share original music with peers

Materials Needed

1. S9 Presentation
2. Student computers with internet access
3. [MIDI@40 PDF](#)
4. ["MIDI Overview and History"](#) Article

Procedures

Lesson Introduction (2 Min):

- Teacher (T) will show the MIDI rendering of the Queen video.
- T will explain this is an example of a project made with MIDI.

Lesson Activity (40 Min):

- S will read one of the following 2 articles individually or in small groups:
 - page 2 of MIDI@40 PDF or [This article](#) (Consider assigning half of the student group to one article and half to the other as they complement each other well)
- Have students search for answers to these questions:
 1. What does MIDI stand for? *Acronym for Musical Instrument Digital Interface*
 2. Does MIDI make sound? *No*
 3. Describe the role of MIDI. *Communication between devices, like a code/language for music.*
 4. In what year were the first devices released that used MIDI? *1983*
 5. What are some modern applications of MIDI? *Note: More examples of where MIDI is used today: In notation programs like Noteflight, Dorico, and MuseScore; in all DAW sequencers like Logic Pro, Soundtrap, and Pro Tools; in all electronic pianos, and all virtual instruments. In other words, a TON!*
- T will lead the discussion for S to share answers.
- T will share links with students to free, online MIDI sequencers such as online sequencer and [beepbox.co](#).
- T will invite each student to compose a single-note melody by clicking into the piano roll in their choice of program. S will work for about five minutes
- T will invite several volunteers to share their melodies with the class. (five minutes)
- For the remainder of class time, S will work on creating a short piece of music with a clear melody/accompaniment texture in ABA form.
- T walks around the classroom and works individually with students as they have questions or need additional instruction.

Assessment Strategies

Wrap-up and Assessment (10 Min):

In small, student-selected or teacher-selected groups, invite students to share their works-in-progress, or completed works with peers. Invite students to continue to create on their own.

Extensions/Adaptations

Consider allowing time the next day, or even a week later to allow students to share anything they worked on at home.

Consider bringing in an electronic instrument that communicates via MIDI, like a piano, wind controller, or DJ equipment, and demonstrate its use.

Adaptations

- Use closed captions for videos, and allow text-to-speech for any required readings.
- Allow students to use speech-to-text to dictate their answers rather than writing.

- Provide students with examples of where to find answers and/or an answer key to match the questions on a MIDI worksheet.
- Share an example single-note melody for students to reference in the piano roll.
- Give students the definition of ABA form, as well as examples, to reference in their melody/accompaniment creation.

Spotlight on Careers in Music

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

- Music Production for video games, movies, podcasts
- Composer/Songwriter
- Recording engineer
- Theater stage manager
- Sound engineer
- Software Developer
- Salesperson
- Manufacturer

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