



Date: _____

Lessons of the Drum

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Please read this Acknowledgement before the start of this lesson to respect the knowledge that is being shared and the Land of the People where the knowledge originates.:

We respectfully acknowledge the original lands of the Indigenous peoples of Treaty 4: Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Dakota, Lakota who are the drummers, Knowledge Keepers, and Elders that inform our understanding of the drum. As well, we acknowledge the homeland to many winged, four-legged, crawling, and water creatures.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this lesson plan, students will be able to:

1. Investigate and identify how arts expressions can reflect diverse worldviews. [Arts Education 8 (Critical/Responsive) - CR8.3]
2. Examine, discuss, and participate in cultural/historical studies from diverse cultural perspectives. [Arts Expressions 8 (Critical/Responsive) - CR8.3d]

LIST OF ACTIVITIES

1. Instruction of Lesson
2. Class Discussion & Extension
3. Student Reflection

MATERIALS

- Optional: Supplies for drum making: raw hide, drum rings, lace or sinew to tie drums, smudge
- Optional: Supplies for rattle making
- Website: Native Drums - About Drumming
- YouTube Video: Drum Teachings with Howard Walker
- Website: Ojibwe Drum - The Significance and Purpose of Drumming in Ojibwe Cultures
- YouTube Videos: Pow Wow Songs
- Website: Hand Drum Songs by Ross Paskemin
- Journal and pen/pencil



Art

Origin

Treaty 4 Territory
Regina
Saskatchewan

Learning Level / Grade

8



60 mins

Related Subjects

Indigenous Ways of Knowing
& Being, Music

DESCRIPTION

Considered to be the *heartbeat of Mother Earth*, the drum plays an important role in the lives of Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island. The percussion instrument's structure is dependent on the cultural group that created it and the materials of the local environment. This lesson invites a local Elder or Knowledge Keeper to the classroom in order to discuss how Indigenous Peoples, of a specific group, understand the importance of the drum within their worldview. The class will review how a drum is made and know about the ceremony and protocol for drum making. Students will learn how to acquire songs in traditional ways and will share songs.

An extension to this lesson involves the creation of drums, by male students, and the creation of rattles by female students. An extension to this lesson involves male students learning how to make a drum and female students learning how to make rattles. The extension would be determined based on the Elder or Knowledge Keeper's preference.

HOLISM AND ALL OUR RELATIONS

This lesson plan has been developed with an Indigenous lens that is holistic in nature, a way of being and knowing that acknowledges our relationships with 'all our relations', including plants and animals, other human beings, the water, land, wind, sun, moon, stars, and more - everything seen and unseen. With 'all our relations' in mind, this lesson plan has been developed with a focus on:

- Participatory and experiential learning activities
- Language and Culture
- Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders
- Relationship with family, ancestors
- Different learning styles; attention given to mind, body, and spirit
- Ethics in the classroom: care, truthfulness and trust, respect, integrity
- Healthy relationship with self and identity
- Relationship with the land
- Personal reflection time (connecting with thoughts and feelings)
- Connections are made with everyday life

TEACHERS' GUIDE

Background/Foundational Information

- The knowledge sourced for this lesson comes from Elders, singers, and/or Knowledge Keepers from the Treaty 4 area who will be invited to the classroom. In order to teach about the drum it is essential that educators reach out to their school's community liaison, cultural coordinator, or Elder for support in this lesson. Find your local Elder or Knowledge Keeper who can speak about the teachings of the drum.

If the Elder decides to extend the lesson to include creating a drum and/or rattles with the students it would involve being outside, which requires a consent form. The consent form would need to be signed prior to the lesson.

If you are unable to find an Elder or Knowledge Keeper, you may choose to use this lesson focusing on the video of Joseph Naytowhow (link in resource section). In order to acknowledge where the knowledge in the video comes from, the teacher must take care and acknowledge them as an individual with a phone call, email, letter, etc. The teacher must also give back to the land with one of the four medicines (tobacco, sage, sweetgrass, or cedar).

For additional information, teachers' resources on drums, and more, visit the [Native Drums](#) website, which has information on First Nations culture and music in Canada.

ACTIVITIES

1 - Instruction of Lesson

Purpose

Students will learn about the teachings and protocol of the drum while also learning a song. This activity aligns with the Arts 8 Critical/Responsive curriculum outcome that has students investigate and identify how arts expressions can reflect diverse worldviews.

Time: 30 mins

Activity Instructions

Prior to starting the lesson the teacher will invite a singer, drum maker, or an Elder to the classroom with the intention of sharing their knowledge about the drum. This guest speaker will help identify:

- how a drum is made;
- ceremony and protocol for drum making;
- songs and how to acquire songs in the traditional way; and,
- share a song.

Note: These teachings will vary depending on which Knowledge Keeper is the guest speaker. In this case it will be someone from the Treaty 4 area.

The teacher should become acquainted with the music prior to the lesson. The teacher should discuss the depth to which the Elder, Knowledge Keeper, drummer will go into during the lesson and shall provide information students in advance of the lesson, if necessary.

Materials and Resources:

1. A Knowledge Keeper or Elder will need to be invited to the class (following appropriate cultural protocols) in order to share their knowledge of the drum and a song.
2. If the Knowledge Keeper is invited to make a drum with male students, the teacher will need the following materials per student:
 - Raw hide
 - Drum rings
 - Lace or sinew to tie drums
 - Smudge

If rattles are going to be made with female students, a rattle maker needs to be invited to class (following appropriate cultural protocols) and the requisite materials need to be provided for each female student.

Consent forms may be required if the Elder or Knowledge Keeper decides to move the students outside near water/river to soak hides. Consent forms should be signed in advance.

This activity is designed to connect with learners with these learning styles...

- Spiritual (e.g., Relational) Learners
- Physical (e.g., Tactile, Experiential, Visual) Learners
- Intellectual (e.g., Rational, Logical) Learners
- Emotional (e.g., Feeling, Intuitive) Learners

... in the following ways:

The following activities reflect the four principal learning styles:

1. **Physical:** the students will sing and learn a new song. Students will be actively listening in order to learn a new song. The Knowledge Keeper may be willing to teach the young men how to make a drum and the young women how to make rattles.
2. **Emotional:** song and drum are a gift that teaches something important for life. Music has the ability to let you spirit soar.
3. **Spiritual:** the spirit and emotion are tied here as both are moved through singing.
4. **Intellectual:** learning to sing with a drum and/or making a drum requires attention and active listening in

order to understand the new knowledge being introduced.

Materials

Click the 'Link' to open and view videos.

To open and print files, please go to the 'files' folder accompanying this downloaded lesson plan.

Resource Title	Type
Optional: Supplies for drum making: raw hide, drum rings, lace or sinew to tie drums, smudge	Supplies 📦
This is in preparation for the second Activity, if the teacher opts to include drum making (and rattle making) in this lesson.	
Optional: Supplies for rattle making	Supplies 📦
If the teacher opts to include rattle making in this lesson, the materials needed to make rattles will need to be sourced by the teacher. Enough supplies will need to be gathered for each female student in the class.	
Website: Native Drums - About Drumming	Link 🔗
Includes information for teachers about a Cree drum	
YouTube Video: Drum Teachings with Howard Walker	Link 🔗
length of video: 23:38 minutes	
Website: Ojibwe Drum - The Significance and Purpose of Drumming in Ojibwe Cultures	Link 🔗
This website about drums and drumming has resources for teaching younger grades (grades 1-2).	
YouTube Videos: Pow Wow Songs	Link 🔗
Search for Pow Wow songs by entering 'pow wow' or 'pow wow songs' in the search field. This set of results is with a search for 'pow wow'.	
Website: Hand Drum Songs by Ross Paskemin	Link 🔗
There are three videos on this webpage with Ross Paskemin singing and drumming. Length of videos: 2:56 minutes; 3:36 minutes; 4:00 minutes	

TEACHING NOTES

2 - Class Discussion & Extension

Purpose

Students will continue to practice and learn a song. Students may also make a drum or rattle which would require more lesson time overall. This activity aligns with the Arts 8 Critical/Responsive curriculum outcome that has students investigate and identify how arts expressions can reflect diverse worldviews.

Time: 15 mins

Activity Instructions

The students will have the opportunity to ask the Knowledge Keeper questions and for a class discussion.

Some Elders will teach the boys how to make a drum. If the boys are making drums the girls will be making rattles. This would be an extension to this lesson and would depend on your budget for the additional materials.

After the song is introduced in this lesson, the teacher can provide students with more practice time until the Knowledge Keeper returns for additional support.

This activity is designed to connect with learners with these learning styles...

- Spiritual (e.g., Relational) Learners
- Physical (e.g., Tactile, Experiential, Visual) Learners

... in the following ways:

The following activities reflect the four principal learning styles:

1. Physical: the Knowledge Keeper may be willing to teach the young men how to make a drum and the young women how to make a rattle.
2. Spiritual: the spirit and emotion are tied here as both are moved through singing.

TEACHING NOTES

3 - Student Reflection

Purpose

To provide time for students to reflect on what they have learned in this lesson.

Time: 10 mins

Activity Instructions

Students will be asked to reflect on their experience of learning in their writing journals. Possible questions for the teacher to pose:

1. Consider the cultural significance of the drum. How would you describe the meaning of the drum in your life?
2. How do you typically learn songs? How is acquiring songs in a traditional way different?
3. How did the content of this lesson contribute to your understanding of Indigenous cultural practices?

This activity is designed to connect with learners with these learning styles...

- Spiritual (e.g., Relational) Learners
- Intellectual (e.g., Rational, Logical) Learners
- Emotional (e.g., Feeling, Intuitive) Learners


... in the following ways:

1. Spiritual: Learners will have time to reflect on how the drum and songs connect with their spirit.
2. Emotional: Learners will have time to reflect on how the drum and songs connect with their feelings.
3. Intellectual: Learners will have time to reflect on how the drum and songs connect with their thoughts about what they have learned and what these learnings mean to them.

Materials

Click the 'Link' to open and view videos.

To open and print files, please go to the 'files' folder accompanying this downloaded lesson plan.

Resource Title	Type
Journal and pen/pencil	Supplies 

TEACHING NOTES

ASSESSMENT









This section contains information for assessing progress in students' learning. While Indigenous approaches to assessment may be highlighted, conventional assessment methods may also be discussed.

Student's discussion group, singing practice and reflective journals will show their learning. Using an *assessment for learning strategy*, it is recommended that instructors make notes of student participation and work completed through Anecdotal Notes.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Click the 'Link' to open and view videos.

To open and print files, please go to the 'files' folder accompanying this downloaded lesson plan.

Resource Title	Type
Office of the Treaty Commissioner	Link 
The Office of the Treaty Commissioner has resources for groups or individuals in school or in workplaces who want to be educated.	
Inspiring Success: First Nation's and Métis, Pre K – 12 Education Policy Framework	Link 
The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's <i>Inspiring Success: First Nation's and Métis, Pre K – 12 Education Policy Framework</i> is being followed. It contains guidelines and protocols for Indigenous content, as well as the content itself.	
Full Circle: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Ways of Knowing	Link 
"Full Circle: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Ways of Knowing is the fifth in a series of Common Threads classroom resources produced by and for Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) members. Each project in the series tackles an important social issue that is cross-curricular in nature and compels students to examine their beliefs, choices and actions."	
The Hoop Dance - Teacher Resource	File (The Hoop Dance - Teacher Resource.pdf) 
This teacher resource extends students' understanding of Hoop Dancing and First Nations dance culture. Teachers are encouraged to read the background information in the first few chapters and explore/deliver the lesson plans shared in chapter 6.	
Sacred Stories and Sacred Songs by Joseph Naytowhow	Link 
The Healing Power of Songs	Link 
Dancing Circles: Strong Hoop, Strong Spirit	Link 
Instructional Video and Teacher Resource	
Indigenous Cultural Arts Engagement	Link 
Holly Rae Yuzicapi uses Indigenous cultural art techniques as a tool for teaching Indigenous history and culture, connecting to identity, personal expression, and defining relationships to the land.	

HOLISM AND ALL OUR RELATIONS

This lesson plan has been developed with an Indigenous lens that is holistic in nature, a way of being and knowing that acknowledges our relationships with 'all our relations', including plants and animals, other human beings, the water, land, wind, sun, moon, stars, and more - everything seen and unseen. With 'all our relations' in mind, this lesson plan has been

developed with a focus on:

Relationship with the land
If the Elder or Knowledge Keeper decides to take students on the land to make a drum then students will be learning on the land. In order for this to happen the teacher will need to get consent form signed and will need to be organized in advance of the lesson. Making a drum is an extension to the original lesson and will mean that the whole lesson will require more time.
Participatory and experiential learning activities
Language and Culture
The focus of this lesson is on drum protocols, the making of a drum, and singing a song. In this way both visual and oral communication are involved.
Relationship with family, ancestors
Students are encouraged to share their learning, especially the cultural components, with their parent(s)/guardian(s), family members, and broader community.
Connections are made with everyday life
Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders
Were Elders or Knowledge Holders involved in the development of this Lesson Plan? Yes Can Elders or Knowledge Holders be invited to help teach part of this lesson plan? Yes
Intergenerational learning with Elders/Knowledge Holders
Ethics in the classroom: care, truthfulness and trust, respect, integrity
This lesson plan manifests care, respect, and integrity by respecting the Elder or Knowledge Keeper, by being a "good listener," and by learning from the knowledge being shared. Respecting protocol and offering tobacco to the Elder or singer/drum maker by the teacher or a select student models an ethical practice. The students are respectful to the group as they support each other in making a drum or learning to sing.
Different learning styles; attention given to mind, body, and spirit
Healthy relationship with self and identity
Learning about the drum and how to make a drum provides students who are interested in drumming and singing opportunities to express themselves in a positive way. Singing is also healing. It gives students a strengthened positive identity. After learning about the drum and listening to songs, students may want to make a drum. They may decide they would like to learn more and be a drum maker or learn songs and be part of a drum circle, which will expand their personal relationships. The Knowledge Keeper and teacher will determine what is possible in the class.
Personal reflection time (connecting with thoughts and feelings)
Students will reflect on their experience of learning in their writing journals. 1. Consider the cultural significance of the drum. How would you describe the meaning of the drum in your life? 2. How do you typically learn songs? How is acquiring songs in a traditional way different? 3. How did the content of this lesson contribute to your understanding of Indigenous cultural practices?

OTHER DETAILS

This Lesson Plan aims to meet curriculum expectations or outcomes for: Saskatchewan Yes

Stream: Academic

RELATED LESSON PLANS

- Lessons of the Flute
- La flûte comme outil d'enseignement
- Indigenous Songs from Treaty 4 and Treaty 6
- Inuit Drumming

CONTRIBUTORS

Name	Role/Job Title	Place
Anna-Leah King	Curriculum Developer, NCCIE	University of Regina
Joseph Naytowhow	Elder, Singer, Songwriter, Storyteller	Sturgeon Lake First Nation
Steffany Salloum	Research Assistant, NCCIE	First Nations University of Canada
Dustin Brass	Regional Lead, NCCIE	First Nations University of Canada

QUESTIONS/MORE DETAILS

For Questions contact: Bettina Schneider (bschneider@fnuniv.ca) for more information.