

The Harmonica in Music Education – Meeting the National Standards for Music Education with the Harmonica

STANDARD 1: Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Students sing independently, on pitch and in rhythm, with appropriate timbre, diction, and posture, and maintain a steady tempo

- Students sing expressively, with appropriate dynamics, phrasing, and interpretation
- Students sing from memory a varied repertoire of songs representing genres and styles from diverse cultures
- Students sing ostinatos, partner songs, and rounds
- Students sing in groups, blending vocal timbres, matching dynamic levels, and responding to the cues of a conductor

Students learning the Harmonica in Music Education will meet standard #1:

Most of the songs which already exist in music education have lyrics. Students should be encouraged to sing the songs as well as to play them. Some students may sing while others play the harmonica and others play a rhythm instrument.

STANDARD 2: Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

- Students perform on pitch, in rhythm, with appropriate dynamics and timbre, and maintain a steady tempo
- Students perform easy rhythmic, melodic, and chordal patterns accurately and independently on rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic classroom instruments
- Students perform expressively a varied repertoire of music representing diverse genres and styles
- Students echo short rhythms and melodic patterns
- Students perform in groups, blending instrumental timbres, matching dynamic levels, and responding to the cues of a conductor
- Students perform independent instrumental parts (e.g., simple rhythmic or melodic ostinatos, contrasting rhythmic lines, harmonic progressions, and chords) while other students sing or play contrasting parts

Students learning the Harmonica in Music Education will meet standard #2:

The Diatonic Harmonica is a good choice of instrument for elementary-aged students. A harmonica method/curriculum shall be developed to provide a varied repertoire including period music such as early music, Renaissance, Classical, and Romantic, and well as dances. Playing of rhythm instruments is integral, and shall be encouraged. Songs may consist of rounds, duets, or trios.

STANDARD 3: Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments

- Students improvise "answers" in the same style to given rhythmic and melodic phrases
- Students improvise simple rhythmic and melodic ostinato accompaniments
- Students improvise simple rhythmic variations and simple melodic embellishments on familiar melodies
- Students improvise short songs and instrumental pieces, using a variety of sound sources, including traditional sounds (e.g., voices, instruments), nontraditional sounds available in the classroom (e.g., paper tearing, pencil tapping), body sounds (e.g., hands clapping, fingers snapping), and sounds produced by electronic means (e.g., personal computers and basic MIDI devices, including keyboards, sequencers, synthesizers, and drum machines)

Students learning the Harmonica in Music Education will meet standard #3:

Students shall be encouraged to create their own rhythmic accompaniments to certain songs. Triangle, finger cymbals, claves, tamborines, and drums are traditionally used. Students shall be encouraged to try out rhythm instruments with a song played on harmonicas and make a choice as to what sounds the best with each particular song. Use the rhythmic accompaniments during performances.

STANDARD 4: Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines

Achievement Standard:

- Students create and arrange music to accompany readings or dramatizations
- Students create and arrange short songs and instrumental pieces within specified guidelines (e.g., a particular style, form, instrumentation, compositional technique)
- Students use a variety of sound sources when composing

Students learning the Harmonica in Music Education will meet standard #4:

Encourage students to write a harmony or partner song to one of the melody-only songs. Play a set of songs; encourage discussion about the similarities, then ask students to work in pairs to write an original song that imitates the song set.

STANDARD 5: Reading and notating music

- Students read whole, half, dotted half, quarter, and eighth notes and rests in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4 meter signatures
- Students use a system (that is, syllables, numbers, or letters) to read simple pitch notation in the treble clef in major keys
- Students identify symbols and traditional terms referring to dynamics, tempo, and articulation and interpret them correctly when performing
- Students use standard symbols to notate meter, rhythm, pitch, and dynamics in simple patterns presented by the teacher

Students learning the Harmonica in Music Education will meet standard #5:

A comprehensive curriculum will thoroughly cover the reading standards listed above and will also include a section on 6/8 meter (also known as “cut time”). Each meter and rhythm shall be introduced and reinforced thoroughly with review songs throughout the book. The majority of songs shall be in a major key but minor keys shall be introduced as well. Students shall be encouraged to hear the differences between major and minor songs. Proper harmonica playing technique shall be taught, with introduction to the two major tonguing methods.

STANDARD 6: Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

- Students identify simple music forms when presented aurally
- Students demonstrate perceptual skills by moving, by answering questions about, and by describing aural examples of music of various styles representing diverse cultures
- Students use appropriate terminology in explaining music, music notation, music instruments and voices, and music performances
- Students identify the sounds of a variety of instruments, including many orchestra and band instruments, and instruments from various cultures, as well as children's voices and male and female adult voices
- Students respond through purposeful movement (e.g., swaying, skipping, dramatic play) to selected prominent music characteristics or to specific music events (e.g., meter changes, dynamic changes, same/different sections) while listening to music

Students learning the Harmonica in Music Education will meet standard #6:

Musical form (such as AABB or ABBA) shall be introduced and songs labeled. Students shall be encouraged to notice the form of other songs which have not be labeled. Some students may dance while others play the harmonica and/or rhythm instruments.

STANDARD 7: Evaluating music and music performances

Students devise criteria for evaluating performances and compositions Students explain, using appropriate music terminology, their personal preferences for specific musical works and styles

Students learning the Harmonica in Music Education will meet standard #7:

Small groups (or pairs) of students perform a song of their choice for the class. Listening members of the class will comment on what they did well and on one thing that could be improved.

STANDARD 8: Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts

Students identify similarities and differences in the meanings of common terms (e.g., form, line, contrast) used in the various arts
Students identify ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with those of music (e.g., foreign languages: singing songs in various languages; language arts: using the expressive elements of music in interpretive readings; mathematics: mathematical basis of values of notes, rests, and time signatures; science: vibration of strings, drum heads, or air columns generating sounds used in music; geography: songs associated with various countries or regions)

Students learning the Harmonica in Music Education will meet standard #8:

Songs may include lyrics in foreign languages. Small numerals by the notes help students with rhythm and counting. Teacher can collaborate with social studies teachers, to build a teaching unit where students can play songs from other countries that they are studying.

STANDARD 9: Understanding music in relation to history and culture

- Students identify by genre or style aural examples of music from various historical periods and cultures
- Students describe in simple terms how elements of music are used in music examples from various cultures of the world
- Students identify various uses of music in their daily experiences and describe characteristics that make certain music suitable for each use
- Students identify and describe roles of musicians (e.g., orchestra conductor, folksinger, church organist) in various music settings and cultures
- Students demonstrate audience behavior appropriate for the context and style of music performed

Students learning the Harmonica in Music Education will meet standard #9:

The curriculum shall include a varied repertoire including period music such as early music, Renaissance, Classical, and Romantic. Folk songs from many countries and cultures are included. Students shall be encouraged to find countries on the globe before they play a song from that area. Students are given some historical context for composers and/or songs.