Reading Public Schools

Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow

Course Description

This introductory music class is for the beginning guitar student. Students will learn to play guitar in a group setting, with each student having access to their own instrument. Upon completion of the class, students will have a strong grasp of guitar technique, a working knowledge of standard music theory, and the ability to interpret popular chord progressions, strum with a pick, and finger pick. Playing a musical instrument allows a student to expand his/her musical competency across instruments, ensembles, and styles, making this course particularly beneficial to students currently in chorus, band, or other music groups.

Standards for Artistic Practice

Based on the 2014 National Core Arts Standards, these practices describe the processes and skills students learn as practitioners throughout the elementary, middle, and high school years in order to achieve artistic literacy.

⇒ *Creating art with artistic intent.*

⇒ *Presenting, performing, or producing artistic works to evoke, express, or communicate.*

⇒ *Responding to art through intellect and emotion.*

⇒ *Connecting the arts to the self, society, history, culture, and other disciplines and bodies of knowledge.*

Source: MA Arts Curriculum Framework 2019, page 20

Content Standards for a Novice Solo Performer

Creating:

1. Improvise short melodic and rhythmic ideas that reflect characteristics of different genres.

2. Record decisions about accuracy of written music (e.g. adding beat subdivisions for a difficult rhythm).

3. Refine musical interpretations exploring different elements (e.g. dynamics and articulations).

Performing:

4. Identify basic strategies musicians use to practice and employ them in readying a musical work for performance.

5. Perform with accuracy and expression works from the instrumental literature with a level of difficulty of 2, on a scale of 1 to 6.

6. Match a musical performance with expressed intent (e.g. wanting the audience to identify with an emotion).

Responding:

7. Analyze how cultures are reflected in a diverse range of musical works.

8. Explain how a musical work is connected to a particular cultural, historical context where it was created.

9. Develop criteria for a rubric for evaluating musical works.

Connecting:

10. Describe influences of one's personal musical style and preferences.

11. Identify musical ideas from different cultures studied in history and social science (e.g. American native).

Source: MA Arts Curriculum Framework 2019, page 45

Fine and Performing Arts Curriculum Guide   Course: Basic Guitar

Units	Essential Questions	Key Activities May Include...
Introduction to Playing	• Why is it important to use proper technique when practicing? • What is the impact of proper technique on performance?	• Warming-up the hands • Exploring and labeling the parts of the guitar
Key of D	• Why is reading music imperative to playing guitar? • How do chord diagrams and symbols relate to notes on the guitar?	• Finger numbers and positions • "Skip to My Lou" • "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore" • Performing alone • Critiquing student performances
Keys of A and G	• Why are chord progressions imperative to playing guitar? • How do composers use markings and symbols to create expression?	• "Worried Man" • "Gotta Travel On" • "Down By the Riverside" • Challenge Songs in the keys of D, A, and G • Performing alone and in small groups (including trios) • Critiquing student performances
Strumming and Technique	• Why is good technique important when playing guitar? • How does playing something slowly help a musician improve their playing and technique over time? • How can the use of different strumming techniques change the emotion of a piece?	• Root strumming pattern • Low-high strumming pattern • Down-up strumming pattern • Folk strumming pattern • Performing alone and in small groups • Critiquing student performances
Keys of E and the Blues	• Why are certain chord progressions used more often? • What is the blues progression and what can the blues tell us about the history of Black Americans? • How do musicians improve the quality of their performances? • Does a performance have to be public to be meaningful?	• Blues progression • Blues strumming pattern • Blues and the Great Migration • Blues as a literary form • Pentatonic and blues scales • Performing alone and in small groups • Critiquing student performances
Keys of E Minor, A Minor, and C	• What can we learn from the music of other cultures? • How does performing music provide a means for artistic growth?	• "Wade in the Water" • "Shalom Chavarim" • "Song of the Volga Boatmen" • "Joshua" strumming pattern • Performing alone and in small groups

Bass Guitar and Barre Chords	• How is the bass guitar different then the common six-string guitar?
	• What is the function of a bass line in popular music?
	• How do musicians use barre chords?
	• Why do musicians use power chords?
		• Playing bass lines
		   • Root bass lines
		   • Diatonic bass lines
		• E barre chord family
		• A barre chord family
		• Performing alone and in small groups
		• Critiquing student performances

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Curriculum Guide	Curriculum guides are public documents aligned with the Massachusetts Department of Education Curriculum Frameworks. They outline and highlight the set of standards that students will learn within certain disciplines at each grade level. Curriculum guides are intended for teachers, parents, and the wide school community to provide an overview of the course of study for the year.
Curriculum Map	Curriculum maps are internal documents utilized as planning tools for teachers and administrators. Curriculum maps keep a focus on the end-of-year standards and chart a course for teaching and learning over the year. They are typically organized by month and/or marking period and may include: genres/topics or units of study, methods of assessment, and major content resources. Maps are fluid documents that are revised and revisited regularly to ensure students' needs are being met.
Content Standards	The standards used as the foundation of our curriculum come directly from the Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework. State standards may be viewed here: http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/
Standards for Artistic Practice	The standards for artistic practice describe the processes and skills students learn as practitioners throughout the elementary, middle, and high school years in order to achieve artistic literacy. Based on the processes presented in the 2014 *National Core Arts Standards*, these practices are grouped into four clusters that focus on creating, presenting/performing, responding, and connecting across the five arts disciplines (dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts)." - *MA Arts Curriculum Framework 2019,* p.20
Essential Questions	Essential questions are questions that are not answerable with an easy answer or a simple instruction. The purpose of essential questions is to provide opportunities for inquiry into learning and act as an umbrella to anchor the unit/lesson.
Key Activities	Key activities are examples of the instructional contexts and structures for learning that students and teachers *might* be engaged in during arts instruction. Those listed represent a sampling and the list is in no way exhaustive. The list is not intended to mandate or require certain types of instruction at any given time, merely to suggest best practices.