



## 200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons

VH1 Music Studio  
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Music Classes, Grades 7-12

Lesson 1

Note to Teachers: The programs viewed in conjunction with these lesson plans may include references, consistent with the eras portrayed, to substance abuse, violent acts, and topics of a sexual and/or political nature. Because this may be considered inappropriate for classroom use in some communities, you are encouraged to review the programs before presenting them to your students, and if necessary, choose those sections that enhance your lesson and are acceptable for use in your classroom.

### Objective

- Students will define the term “covering” as it is used in popular music.
- Students will compare two versions of the same song as performed by different artists.
- Students will discuss the longevity of artists through their music and how “covering” can be beneficial to their careers.

#### National Standards for Music Education

6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

## Materials

- VHS VCR Player
- Television
- Audio playback equipment
- VH1's *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*
- Web-based lesson materials
- Pencils/pens and paper (students)
- Two audio recordings of the song "Long Tall Sally"; original by Little Richard and the cover version by The Beatles
- Two audio recordings of the song "Walk This Way"; original version by Aerosmith and the collaboration between Aerosmith and Run DMC

### Prior Knowledge:

- Students have experience discussing various musical styles and genres.
- Students are familiar with the term "pop icon."

## Procedures

1. Lead students in a discussion about "covering" in popular music. Provide them with a definition (when a musician performs and/or records a song originally performed and/or recorded by another artist), and explain that many famous pop musicians have either had their songs covered, or have covered another artists' songs. Ask them to name a few songs with which they are familiar that have been performed by two or more artists.
2. Tell students they are going to hear two renditions of the song "Long Tall Sally," the original and a cover version, but do not give them name of the artists or say which version is the original. Have them compare the two versions by writing down the similarities and/or differences they notice while listening.
3. Play both audio recordings of "Long Tall Sally," the original by Little Richard and the cover by The Beatles (either order).
4. Lead students in discussing the two versions of the song, comparing musical and/or stylistic differences. Ask them if they can identify the performers, and which version of the song was the original. Which did they like better?
5. Show VH1's *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*: Aerosmith, #83, Episode 3.
6. Guide students in discussing Aerosmith's career and status as a pop icon. Why are they considered a pop icon (set the standard for the rock ballad, longevity, etc.)? Have students comment on why they think the

group continues to sell millions of records and keeps going after thirty years in the recording industry. Why was teaming up with Run DMC so important to reviving Aerosmith's career (rejuvenated their career with younger listeners, etc.)?

7. Show VH1's *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*: Run DMC, #71, Episode 4.
8. Lead students in discussing the career of Run DMC. How did they pave the way for today's rappers (their music defined the rap style, they brought credibility to rap music, etc.)? What particular accomplishments helped Run DMC to be established as a pop icon (featured on *American Band Stand* and on cover of *Rolling Stone*, etc.)? Are Aerosmith and Run DMC considered pop icons for any of the same, or similar, reasons? How did teaming up with Aerosmith on a re-make of "Walk This Way" help Run DMC's career (they bridged the gap between Hip Hop and Rock music)?
9. Play both audio recordings of "Walk This Way," the original by Aerosmith and the collaborative version with Run DMC (either order).
10. Have students discuss the two versions of "Walk This Way" by noting the similarities and differences. Which do they prefer, and why? Ask them if Run DMC's version is a true example of covering, since Aerosmith collaborated on the song with them.

#### National Standards for Music Education

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.



These standards-based materials are provided through a partnership with MENC: The National Association for Music Education. This lesson plan was created by MENC member Michelle Barnes, General Music and World Drumming, Fall Creek Valley Middle School, Indianapolis, IN.