



200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons

VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Music Classes, Grades 7-12

Lesson 2

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 factors affecting a song’s popularity when it is originally released and when it is released as a “cover.”
- Students will experiment with arranging a pop song to reflect a different musical style.

National Standards for Music Education

4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
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 "I Will Always Love You"; as performed by Dolly Parton and as performed by Whitney Houston (in the movie "The Bodyguard")

Prior Knowledge:

- Students have completed Lesson 1 of the "Pop Icons: Take Two" series.
- Students have experience discussing various musical styles and genres.
- Students are familiar with basic musical terms such as tempo, instrumentation, dynamics, etc.

Procedures

1. Review the definition of "covering" as it was discussed in Lesson 1 with students. Remind them that many famous pop musicians have either recorded a cover version of another artist's song, or had their own song or songs covered by another artist. Suggest that some artists have a bigger hit with the cover version than the original artist did when the song was first released.
2. Show VH1's *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*: Dolly Parton, #189, Episode 1.
3. Lead students in discussing Dolly Parton's status as a pop culture icon. Draw their attention to Shania Twain's comment that "everyone knows who Dolly Parton is." Do they with that analysis? Why or why not? Why are her songs so popular and timeless?
4. Show VH1's *200 Greatest Pop Culture Icons*: Whitney Houston, #116, Episode 3.
5. Lead students in discussing Whitney Houston's status as a pop icon. How do her pop icon characteristics differ from those of Dolly Parton? Ask students to discuss how Whitney's controversial marriage to Bobby Brown has affected her pop icon status.
6. Play both audio recordings of "I Will Always Love You," the original by Dolly Parton and the cover by Whitney Houston (either order). Ask students to write down any differences and similarities they notice between the two versions. Remind them that Dolly Parton's version is country and Whitney Houston's version is modern pop.
7. Lead students in a discussion of the two versions of the song. Explain that Dolly Parton wrote and originally recorded "I Will Always Love You," but Whitney Houston made it a smash hit when she used it as a part of

her movie “The Bodyguard.” Ask students why they think Whitney Houston had a bigger hit with the song, and if the popularity of her cover version had a negative or positive affect on Dolly Parton’s career and her original recording of the song.

8. Divide students into small groups of two or three, and tell them they are going to “arrange” a pop song to be a cover for another artist. They may choose a pop song with which they are familiar, as long as it is classroom appropriate, and an alternate musical style for their “arrangement” (country song to pop song, pop song to classical song, rap song to pop ballad, etc.). It may be helpful if they have an artist in mind for whom they are creating the arrangement.
9. Have students discuss within their groups the aspects of the original song that they would change to create the “cover” version, making note of their ideas on paper. How would the instrumentation change? Would the vocal style change? Have students also discuss tempo, dynamics, rhythmic changes, etc. that would alter the overall style of the original song. The “covers” don’t need to be performed, but students could share their creations with the class.

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.