

BAIP/Brain-targeted Teaching® Learning Unit

Learning Unit Title: Wordplay

Wit & Wisdom Module 2, Grade 5

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Academic Content Area(s): ELA & Music/Songwriting



Word Play Module 2, Grade 5 BTT + AED + W&W

By: Teaching Artists Dan + Claudia Zanes, and
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With the overarching goal of creating a collective community that supports character development for lifelong thriving, our ELA and musical content simultaneously unfolds, building to a culminating moment of songful expression which demonstrates mastery of both content and song structure understanding.



Essential Question: How and why do writers and songwriters play with words?

Suggested Student Understanding:

- Recognize and explain examples of wordplay in various media, and analyze how authors and songwriters use wordplay meaningfully and with humor.
- Trace and describe the narrative structure of *The Phantom Tollbooth* and explain (in paragraph form and song) how the author uses wordplay to develop the characters, setting, and plot.
- Write an explanatory paragraph and/or a structured song elaborating on a central theme based on how the main character responds to challenges and changes as a result of his journey. Support ideas with specific quotations from the text.
- Speak/sing clearly and listen attentively/respectively to a speaker, paying attention to description and details in order to visualize what they are communicating and provide elaboration.

Learning Unit Overview:

In this unit, students will learn how authors and songwriters use language and wordplay to convey meaning, develop themes, and engage with the world around them. Through various basic song structures, students will apply acquired content knowledge and express an understanding of grade-level reading, writing, and speaking skills.

BT1: Setting the Emotional Climate for Learning

In creating an atmosphere of joy, respect, belonging, and a celebration of sacred creativity:

- Community building is central: Teachers are given the tools they need to create community norms in their classrooms with their students. Additionally, teachers are supported in guiding students through

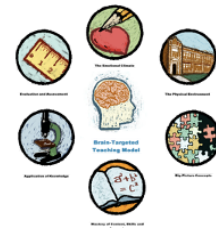
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discussion of what music truly is and means to us as a group, as conveying the core belief that we, as humans, are music. We are all worthy and able of creating music.

- This unit is heart-centered: Mindful-awareness practices support the lowering of stress hormones, increased focus and flow state in the brain, and a heightened connection with inner truth, authenticity, and intuition.
 - Affirming practices are prioritized throughout: Daily “glows” routine creates a community of courageous, seen, and heard musicians.
 - Collective courage is developed: The teacher is a model for being courageously vulnerable. Routines for whole group support are taught, and students grow their confidence and willingness to express themselves authentically through music over time.
 - Pure participation is celebrated: Simply being a participant is consistently noteworthy. All students are given the resources they need (scaffolded, UDL) to find joy in self-expression.
 - SEL is integrated consciously: From daily routines to feedback tools, students are given ample opportunities to build their skills in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The daily “check-in” song we offer as part of this module is an example of this conscious application. “Around the Sun,” an original song by Dan + Claudia Zanes, is a daily routine to start each ELA class. Through rhythm and song, students rehearse their rhythm skills, check in with their present state, and share it aloud, allowing daily reflection/expression and the ability for all voices to be heard, as well as supplying an opportunity for the teacher to conduct a classroom “temperature check.”
 - Teacher preparation is prioritized: We understand how daunting using music may seem as a way to teach content standards for many ELA educators. Therefore we provide simple teacher training curated for our module.
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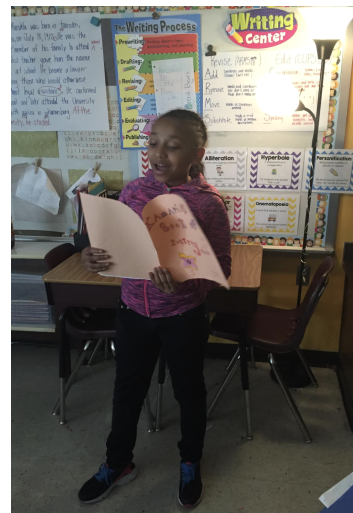
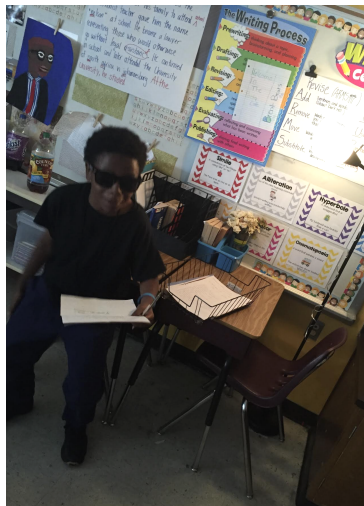
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BT2: Creating the Physical Environment for Learning

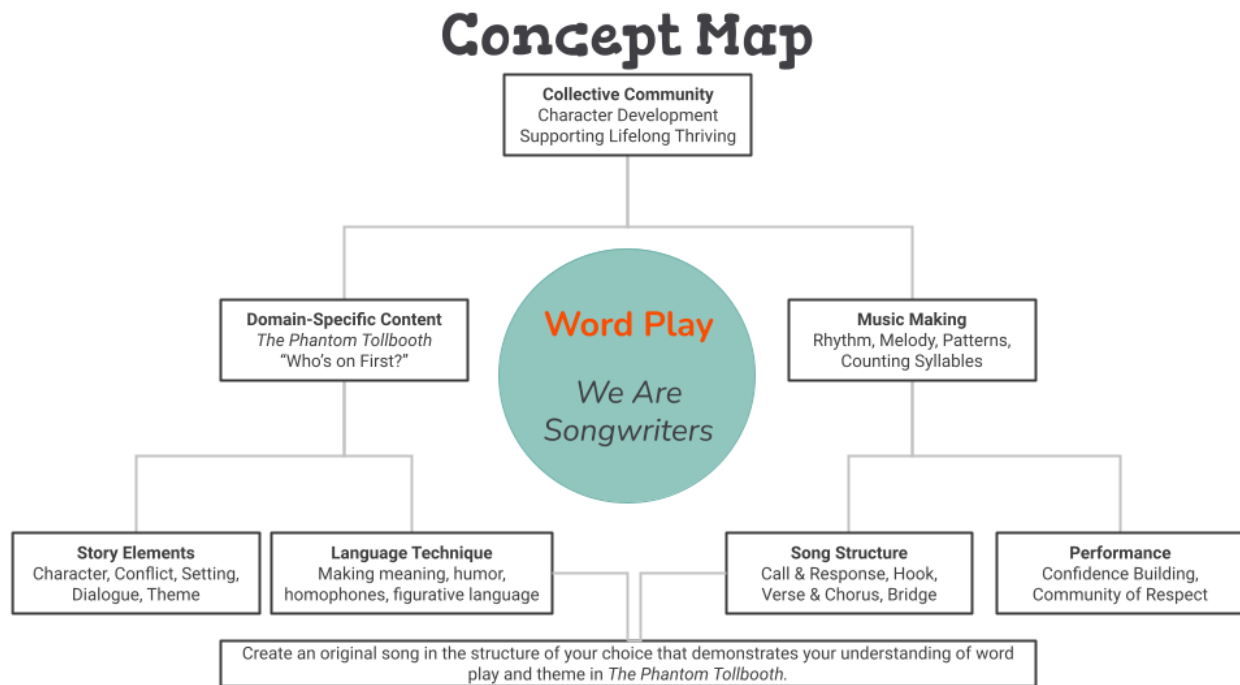
To create a physical space that honors and celebrates a community of readers, writers, and musicians:

- Seating: Circle arrangement (teacher included)
- Grounding with Sound: Pitch pipe, clapping, sound bowl for centering
- Walls that Talk: Domain-specific and music-specific vocabulary on walls for reference (class-created as part of the module)
- Musicians Before Me: Culturally responsive music selections played during work time and used as song examples when studying song structure; diverse artists represented on wall posters
- Stage Presence: Specific stage area designated, lighting opinions (for dimming, creating stage or “spotlight” effect), performance props (sunglasses, hats, etc)



- Sacred pages: Songwriting journal with additional reflective space provided
- Curated Background Music: Original audio by Dan + Claudia Zanes
- Art Around Me: Student work is displayed on the walls, building throughout the module

BT3: Designing the Learning Experience



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BT4: Teaching for Mastery of Skills, Content, and Concepts

Analyze how wordplay creates confusion and humor in a series of riddles and jokes and in the comedy routine “Who’s on First?”

- *Simple, humorous music games utilizing call and response structure use examples from “Who’s on First?” and other selections to focus on homophones and multiple-meaning words.*

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Describe wordplay related to setting, character, conflict, and lessons learned in *The Phantom Tollbooth*.

- *Simple songs (some melodies of well-known existing songs) function as mnemonic devices to teach story elements and store understanding of the elements in deep memory. Students later edit and adapt portions of these songs with specific evidence and details from the novel to integrate learning further.*

Clarify and explain the meaning of adages and proverbs.

- *Culturally relevant, song-form proverb examples are provided by Dan + Claudia Zanes for further analysis and allow natural examples of how rhythm, pattern, and melodic choices amplify meaning.*

Analyze how Milo has grown from the beginning of the book, explaining ways in which he prepared for his hero's quest.

- *Throughout the module, students write through scaffolded pedagogy simple songs documenting Milo's journey. By looking back through their songwriting notebook, students analyze evidence of how Milo has grown and changed. This information can be summarized and analyzed when discussing themes, which will be part of the chorus in the final integrated assignment of the module.*

Express awareness of personal growth as a writer and songwriter from the beginning to the end of the module.

- *Through students' personal songwriting reflection journaling exercise and final Socratic Seminar, students analyze and reflect upon their own growth from the beginning to the end of the module.*

With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

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- *Draft, edit, and revise a complete exploded moment narrative (through paragraph form and/or song structure) that integrates wordplay and story elements, and conveys the book's themes related to the wisdom Milo learned.*

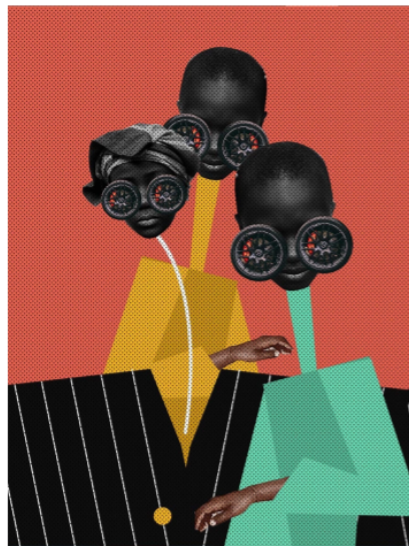
Rehearse fluency and *stage presence* to prepare to share and perform final narratives (paragraphs and songs).

Participate as an engaged and respectful audience member, supplying peer feedback and affirmations.

Describe observations *using developing knowledge of music and terms of two paintings, noting how each painting plays with images. Alternative/additional surrealist images included for cultural relevance:*



"A Kaleidoscope of Butterflies Followed Me to the Station" by Chelle Barbour



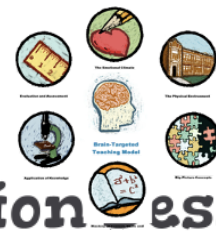
"Uwa Na Ele" by Azuka Muoh

Visual art analysis through music:

If this collage/painting was a song, what would it be called?

What is the rhythm of this piece? Is it fast? Slow? Clam? Energetic? Relaxing? Invigorating?

BT5: Teaching for Extension and Application of Knowledge



Scaffolded & Aligned Application Design

01	FQT 1: Write an explanatory paragraph to explain how words create both confusion and humor in Bud Abbott and Lou Costello's comedy routine "Who's on First?"	Learn call and response song structure Apply evidence from "Who's on First?" that shows how words cause confusion and humor, including necessary context.
02	FQT 2: Write a "character snapshot" scene featuring Milo and an invented character from Abandon Elementary School, including wordplay to describe both the setting and the character.	Learn call and response (+ hook) song structure Use descriptions and sensory language to show not tell about the setting, characters, and situation. Describe a setting and a character's traits using wordplay.
03	FQT 3: Write an "exploded moment" scene featuring Milo and an invented character from Abandon Elementary School, including dialogue sequences to show conflicting ideas between characters.	Learn verse and chorus song structure Use dialogue that demonstrates conflict between two characters within song.
04	FQT 4: Write an explanatory paragraph to identify one overarching theme in Norton Juster's <i>The Phantom Tollbooth</i> , and explain how Juster reveals this theme by revealing how the main character, Milo, changes from the beginning to end of the story.	Verse and chorus structure + learn additional, selected element (rap, bridge, instrumental) Identify and explain a theme from a novel. Analyze a character's transformation and explain its connection to a theme.
05	EOM Task: Write an "exploded moment" scene in which Milo encounters one of the demons from the Mountains of Ignorance on his return journey and helps him resolve a conflict related to the wordplay of his name and his experiences in <i>The Phantom Tollbooth</i> , by conveying wisdom related to the story's central themes.	Structure = student choice Create an original song in the structure of your choice that demonstrates your understanding of word play and theme in <i>The Phantom Tollbooth</i> .

- The chart above shows the module Focusing Question Tasks and End of Module Task (left column) in the order they appear in Wit & Wisdom's unit alongside the corresponding songwriting activity (right column) for each task. The songwriting is completely standards-aligned, and like the Wit & Wisdom tasks, scaffolds and builds in complexity.
- Depending on the school culture, we imagine the teacher could use the AI activities as preparation for the Wit & Wisdom existing tasks and as a way to teach the content the students will be writing about in traditional formats. Or, it is also possible to use the songwriting tasks as a complete replacement for the traditional paragraph structure assignments.
- As song structures are learned, students are encouraged to identify the parts of the songs they are learning (chorus, verse, etc.) in the music they and their families already listen to and to share those examples with the class. Culturally relevant song examples are supplied by Dan + Claudia during the teaching experience, as well as model examples for each arts integrated activity/assessment within the right column.
- A bank of UDL and inclusive resources including teaching tutorials and scaffolded graphic organizers for both the traditional writing tasks and songwriting activities will be provided.

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The benefits of this aligned, scaffolded design for the AI components include:

Memory

- Allows for natural (though non-redundant) repeated rehearsals
- Integration of content within a song creates mnemonic devices

ELA Standard Support

- Creating songs that align with content standards and major assessment tasks allows students to prepare for Wit & Wisdom's rigorous writing.
- All song graphic organizers align with those students use to craft their explanatory paragraphs and "exploded moment" narratives.
- Same text evidence and comprehension skill applicable in song and Wit & Wisdom task.

Universal Design for Learning

- Student choice, autonomy
- Provides multiple means of engagement, representation, and action/expression

BT6: Evaluation of (and for) Learning

Daily Feedback Tools:

Glow: Students reflect on their own learning and celebrate their peers by sharing affirmations ("glows") aloud.

Bells & Whistles: Cheers, chants, gestures, or sounds that spread encouragement throughout performing experiences.

Teacher Check-Ins: The teacher builds rapport with consistent one-on-one student check-ins (celebratory & constructive feedback).

Rubrics:

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Currently creating rubrics integrating the existing Wit & Wisdom format in the AI experience and music standards. This will be created in both teacher-facing and student-facing versions.

Student self-reflection:

My Songwriter Reflection

Directions: Reflect on your songwriting journey by journaling your responses to the questions below. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers, rather express what is most true for you.

1. Did you use one of the song structures you learned? Did you make your own structure?
2. Did your song express what you wanted to say? Do you feel you made your message clear?
3. What did you enjoy most about your song and/or the songwriting process?
4. What was challenging about this process? What was most surprising?
5. Did you learn something new about yourself through the songwriting process?
6. How did you support your classmates as they wrote and shared their work?
7. What are you most proud of from this experience?

This post-performance/post-EOM Task self-evaluation/reflection tool supports student empowerment and SEL core competencies.

Additionally, it will also be integrated as part of the end-of-module Socratic Seminar for students to share their reflections as a community.