



**CLASSROOM ACTIVITY**

**Behind the Scenes of Country  
Music's Biggest Night™**

**Creating an Awards  
Ceremony**

**LESSON  
OBJECTIVES**

Students will be able to:

- Create a purpose and vision for the awards show that will guide the production.
- Compile a list of awards categories that honor the skills and talents of students while participating in a selection and voting process.
- Plan and execute a live awards event, including drafting a script, designing a set, creating marketing materials and programs, curating a playlist, and directing the production.
- Negotiate and resolve problems as they arise.

**GRADE RANGE**

6–12

**DURATION**

5 class periods of 45–60 minutes each

**LESSON OVERVIEW**

The CMA Virtual Field Trip allows students to experience a behind-the-scenes look at the production and filming of the CMA Awards. This activity gives students the opportunity to recreate the glamour and excitement of the CMA Awards and step into the roles of the professionals who make it all happen.

Drawing on the Virtual Field Trip (VFT) experience, students will use what they discover to plan, organize, and execute a dynamic awards event for their class or school. To be successful in this complex and exciting undertaking, they will need to rely on their 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Learning Skills: critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication. *\*Educators will be asked to consider collaboration with their music, journalism, or theater teacher to enhance the learning experience.*

The bounds of this activity are limitless, and it gives educators an opportunity to personalize learning while highlighting the special abilities and interests of their students. Are students interested in photography? Extend their learning and have them create a photo story of the awards show. Are students technology experts? Take their learning further and have them design one-of-a-kind trophies with CAD software and use a 3D printer to produce them. Are students budding musicians? Give them the opportunity to show off their talents and write/perform special music during the event. This culminating activity gives students of all abilities and backgrounds a chance to stretch their creative and technical skills while giving them well-deserved recognition for their talents and achievements.

## DRIVING QUESTION

How can students collaborate to plan and produce an awards event to honor their special skills and talents?

## NATIONAL CONTENT STANDARDS

### CCSS Speaking and Listening

- Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

## Framework for 21<sup>ST</sup>-Century Learning Skills

### Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: Reason Effectively

Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis.

### Communication and Collaboration: Communicate Clearly

Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written, and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts.

### Media Literacy: Analyze Media

- Understand both how and why media messages are constructed, and for what purposes.
- Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of media.

### Media Literacy: Create Media Products

Understand and utilize the most appropriate media creation tools, characteristics, and conventions.

### National Coalition for Core Arts Standards

4.3.2 Demonstrate understanding of expressive qualities (such as dynamics and tempo) and how creators use them to convey expressive intent.

5.1.7 Identify and apply collaborative-developed criteria (such as demonstrating correct interpretation of notation, technical skill of performer, originality, emotional impact, and interest) to rehearse, refine and determine when the music is ready to perform.

7.2.8 Compare how the elements of music and expressive qualities related to the structure within programs of music.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since 1958, the Country Music Association has been working to further the impact and increase the reach of Country Music around the world. It was the first trade organization created for a specific genre of the music industry. In 1967, the CMA began the yearly tradition of organizing an awards show to honor excellence in Country Music. Since those first 10 awards were given out more than 55 years ago, hundreds of vocalists, musicians, songwriters, producers, directors, and music technicians have been recognized.

Awards shows have become a ubiquitous part of today's culture. Millions of fans watch award shows on television, streaming online, shared videos, and videos on social media. Fans also participate live in the process by interacting with other fans, celebrities, and show representatives on social media during the events. The glamour of seeing celebrities walk down the red carpet in their fashionable best, and the excitement of so many music legends and performers converging on one stage at the same time is exhilarating.

This activity gives students the opportunity to bring a bit of that glamour and excitement to their own classroom and become the celebrities! Students will work together to create a mini CMA Awards ceremony to honor their own successes and decide on an overall goal of the event. What accomplishments should be recognized? What qualities should be honored? What awards should be given? The CMA Award winners are chosen by a vote by the CMA members. Consider a method of selecting winners to ensure a fair, unbiased, and inclusive event that recognizes the achievements and unique contributions of all students. Regardless of whether they win an individual award or not, the collaboration and execution of a dynamic and elaborate event is an achievement in and of itself, worthy of celebration and recognition.

Taking a brief look at the credits at the end of the CMA Awards gives fans an idea of the vast numbers of talented and skilled people it takes to plan and execute such a large event. So many more people are involved than appear on the red carpet in their finest attire! For the purposes of this activity, the different trades and jobs of the music industry, event planning, and broadcast television have been whittled down to five different "departments" that students will collaborate within. Specific roles and tasks will be suggested, but may need to be tailored to fit each individual classroom, students, and campus. Consider collaborating with a music, journalism, and theater teacher to extend student learning and make the show a campus-wide event.

A glossary of commonly used music and production terms is included within the resources. Students will use planning sheets to help stay organized and keep them from overlooking any tasks or details. Students will work in the following departments to make the event a success:

- **Production and Management**—The Production and Management Department is responsible for overseeing the entire awards event, from wardrobe to seating, and graphics to video broadcasting. There are many people involved in the small details of an event like this, and this department makes sure that everyone is communicating and working towards the ultimate goal and vision. The producers and managers make sure that no task is forgotten and no detail is overlooked. They must be organized, good problem solvers, and excellent listeners. Possible jobs in this department could be:
  - producer
  - director
  - audience coordinator
  - music director
  - art director
  - security

- **Stage and Technical**—The Stage and Technical Department is responsible for creating and executing the vision for the stage area. This is the area where all eyes during the event will be directed, so it must reflect the purpose and vision of the show. This department ensures the stage is safe, visible, and attractive. Props, lighting, microphones, speakers, projectors, and screens all fall in the purview of Stage and Technical. The people who work in this department must be detail-oriented and meticulous. They should be creative and skilled, or willing to learn a new skill! Possible jobs in this department could be:
  - stage manager
  - lighting designer
  - music coordinator
  - sound operator
  - camera operator
  - carpenter
  - screens programmer
- **Talent and Scripts**—The Talent and Scripts Department is responsible for creating and performing the entertainment during the show. From the host to the performers to the award presenters, this department is the face of the event. Talent and Scripts is responsible for writing and coordinating all the content of the show. The people who make up this department must be comfortable speaking, presenting, or performing in public. They often have musical, comedic, or public speaking talents, and they make sure the show is entertaining, while meeting the vision and goals of the event. Possible jobs in this department could be:
  - scriptwriter
  - talent coordinator
  - host or MC
  - performer
  - award presenter
- **Wardrobe and Glamour**—The Wardrobe and Glamour Department is responsible for helping the talent express their individual identities and telling the story of the awards show through costumes, hair, and makeup. They make sure that everyone who will be onstage looks their best and that their appearance aligns with their public image. The people who work in wardrobe and glamour must be creative and skilled. Most importantly, they must be good listeners and collaborators so they can work with other people successfully. Possible jobs in this category include:
  - costume designer
  - hair stylist
  - makeup artist
- **Media and Marketing**—The Media and Marketing Department is responsible for crafting and distributing the message of the awards show. People can't attend or watch if they don't know about it! This department works with the art director and other departments to create programs, invitations, advertising posters, social media graphics and posts, and the messages, images, and visuals that will be displayed on the screen during the show. People who work in this

department must be creative and have an eye for design. They should be detail-oriented and able to design print and digital media that supports and promotes the message and vision of the show. Possible jobs in this category include:

- graphic designer
- social media marketing
- printer
- copywriter

This event is entirely customizable and should be unique to the goals and students participating. The purpose and scope of the event is determined by the educator and should be a fun and rewarding experience for everyone involved. Consider adding complexity for students passionate about technology, or simplify the process and expectations for students depending on student time, needs or resources. Let students incorporate their own personalities, culture, and background throughout event. It should be a true celebration of your class and all they've achieved this year. Consider inviting family and community members to participate as audience members.

## KEY VOCABULARY

- producer
- director
- script
- talent
- stage manager
- technical
- audio
- camera operator
- lighting designer
- carpenter
- wardrobe
- glamour
- ballot
- graphics
- marketing
- security
- red carpet
- audience coordinator

## MATERIALS

The nature of this project is open-ended and customizable. The ultimate goal is to create an awards ceremony production experience to highlight all students. Guide students and allow them to discover how various professionals with different backgrounds and skills collaborate to make these events dramatic and memorable. Watching the [CMA Virtual Field trip](#) allows students to see this in action, prior to putting on their own event. Materials will vary based on the specifics of your production. Ultimately, students need a space to put on their show, and the creativity to make their vision happen. Listed below are some materials needed to plan, record, and stream the awards ceremony:

- Laptop or device connected to the internet
- Access to graphic editing or presentation software like [Discovery Education Studio](#), Canva, Google Slides, Keynote, or PowerPoint
- Access to sound, video recording equipment and editing software
- Various art supplies and equipment for set creation, trophies, and costumes that might include:
  - butcher paper
  - paint and brushes
  - cloth
  - wood or furniture scraps
  - cardboard or matte board
  - posterboard
  - glue or staples
  - used clothing
- Lighting and sound equipment like microphones, speakers, and spotlights
- A venue with a stage area and seating for the audience

## TEACHER PREPARATION

- Plan ahead for a location and time for your ceremony. Coordinate and collaborate with music and theater teachers to make full use of resources. Be sure to get approval and confirmation from your school administration. This is an excellent opportunity to showcase the amazing work your students do, and getting administration on board early on will go a long way towards making the event a success.
- Once location and time are confirmed, inform your family members and any other involved adults on campus so they can plan to attend or contribute.
- Decide on the purpose and scope of your event.
  - What student achievements would you like to honor?
  - How many awards will you give out?
  - How will nominees and winners be chosen so that the system is fair, inclusive, and student-affirming?
  - What technology do you have available?

- Will you be recording or streaming the ceremony?
- Will your music and/or theater teachers be able to collaborate on the event?
- How many people will be invited to watch the ceremony?
- What live entertainment and/or student work will be performed or displayed for the audience?

Teacher preparation for this activity is vital to its success. Having these questions answered before introducing the project to your students will help them process and organize such a large event. With so many moving parts and people involved, students will need a clear vision and purpose so they can make their creativity productive and fulfilling.

## SESSION FLOW

### ENGAGE

Begin the session by using the Discovery Education Instructional Strategy: *Half the Picture*.

- Using the *Half the Picture—Discovery Education SOS Strategy Educator Resource*, share the cropped image with students. Ask students to share, with a shoulder partner, what they believe this is an image of and why they think they are correct.
- Share the full image with the class and share with them that they will be creating a Mini-CMA Awards Ceremony Event.

### EXPLORE

Students will explore the concept of a broadcast awards show by watching the CMA Awards and other awards shows in preparation for creating a ceremony. Be sure to remind students to reflect on their Virtual Field Trip experience as a basis for their knowledge. Have students consider elements they would want to change for the creation of their own event and why their event will stand out as unique. Ask students to consider how they can showcase their local culture and ensure the event is inclusive for everyone in participation.

- Have students work individually or in small groups to explore and examine elements of the CMA Awards and other awards shows. Students should use the internet to find media clips and articles describing these types of events.
- Direct students to collect data from their exploration on the "Awards Show Capture Sheet." Students should research the following information:
  - What is the purpose of the awards show?
  - Who is the audience?
  - How does the style and tone of the awards show reflect the purpose and audience?
  - What is the basic structure of the show?
  - Are there any performances or displays of work? What purpose do they serve?
  - Is there a host or MC for the awards show? What purpose does that person serve? What makes that person effective or not?
  - How are the awards given out? Do the recipients speak when they collect their awards? If so, what does that speech usually include?
- Facilitate a class discussion where students can explain their findings. Be sure to discuss the issues of ethics that arise when it comes to awards shows.

- What purpose do awards shows serve?
- How do the awards committees ensure a fair and transparent process?
- Do the awards shows have a responsibility to their audience? If so, what does that include?
- How do the producers ensure a safe and entertaining event for the attendees and the broadcast audience?
- How can producers prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- Have the class create a vision board for their own awards show. Facilitate a discussion of the goals of the show and the student achievements it will honor. Discuss the process you determined in your **Teacher Preparation** for selecting the awards categories and determining the recipients.

## INVESTIGATE AND CREATE

### Inquiry Questions

The culminating project for this activity is for students to plan and execute an awards show of their own to celebrate student success. Students will step into the role of producers, technicians, designers, and even celebrities as they step into the glamorous and dramatic world of awards shows.

**Teacher Note:** *Be sure to complete the **Teacher Preparation** activities prior to beginning this project with students. If possible, collaborate with your campus administration to ensure your event's success.*

- Guide students through the process of planning and executing an awards show event. The show should:
  - Celebrate student achievements and talents by giving out awards to specific students or groups of students based on your **Teacher Preparation** planning.
  - Feature presentations or displays of student work.
  - Include student performances that reflect their talents and the awards being given.
- Determine the roles students will take on during this project. As students may have learned while viewing the CMA Virtual Field Trip, there are several categories of jobs that all contribute to making events like this successful. Assign roles to students based on their preferences and aptitudes. This allows student ownership over their work, and gives them the opportunity to show off their unique skills and talents. Student roles are grouped under these "departments":
  - Production and Management
  - Stage and Technical
  - Talent and Scripts
  - Wardrobe and Glamour
  - Media and Marketing
- Review your classroom's standards and expectations for group work. Make sure that all students understand the importance of respectful collaboration. Students should know how to problem-solve disagreements within the group, including how and when to seek input from the teacher. One commonly used example of expectations is to make the word "GROUPS" into a mnemonic device and display it in the classroom.
  - G—Give thoughtful feedback OR Get along
  - R—Respect others and their thoughts OR Remember the task



- O—On task all the time OR Own your part
- U—Use kind words OR Use soft voices
- P—Participate actively
- S—Stay with your group
- Have students meet in groups with other students in their department so that they can research and plan. Guide them through the assigning of tasks so that each student knows exactly for what they are responsible. Students should refer back to their vision for the event that they created during the **Explore** stage of this activity. They may also need to do further research on what their jobs entail and how to be successful. Remind students to keep their vision, roles, and assigned tasks in mind throughout the project to stay on track.
- Since this project will likely occur over several class periods, conduct brief “Beginning of Day” and “End of Day” check-ins as a whole class. Each department can state what they have accomplished already, what still needs to be done, and any questions or issues that need to be resolved by the class as a whole. This will help hold students accountable for their time and also keep the class focused on their goals.
- Monitor students as they work with their groups to help them problem-solve and stay on task.
- Use this opportunity to enrich student learning by collaborating with your music, theater, or broadcast journalism teachers. They may be able to guide students in the following areas:
  - Theater and/or Journalism—Stage and Technical
  - Music and/or Theater—Talent and Scripts
  - Theater—Wardrobe and Glamour
  - Journalism—Media and Marketing
- Invite parents, community members, and other teachers to attend the event and show their support for the students.

**Teacher Note:** *If other educators are not available to collaborate, consider reaching out to community members that could guide and mentor students. Consider having specific student groups (working on stage, technical, and marketing) view [“This is STEAM Country” video topic series](#) highlighting Country Music professionals that work in harmony to bring events, like CMA Fest, to life.*

- Guide students through the awards show “night” to make sure that all students work together and have fun.
- Set-up a dress rehearsal to practice roles, performances, and address miscommunication or questions prior to the actual event.

## REFLECTION

An event is only as successful as its audience perceives it to be. Regardless of what happens during the show, the audience always loves to make their opinions known. Awards shows like the CMA Awards draw millions of viewers each year. As social media has expanded and become an integral part of marketing, viewers have gained the opportunity to participate in these events like never before.

To help students evaluate and reflect on the success of their class awards show, create a low-tech, social media inspired “wall” in your classroom. Invite students to create “posts” to hang on the wall that give their constructive opinions about the event. Remind students that, just like online, they should “think before you post.” Consider whether their post is:

- T—True
- H—Helpful
- I—Important
- N—Necessary
- K—Kind

Students should reflect on their own performance as well as the overall execution of the event. Encourage students to be positive and celebratory, as the event was intended to celebrate student success. Guide students by asking them to consider the following questions:

- What went well during the event?
- Was there anything that stood out as particularly entertaining?
- Were there any surprises or great reactions from the winners of the awards?
- Which performances were favorites?
- What made this event special?

**Teacher Note:** *The CMA and Discovery Education teams would love to see the event you create by working in harmony through collaboration and creativity. Consider sharing images of your special event on social media, with permission from parents. If posting to Facebook or Instagram tag @cma @DiscoveryEd and use the hashtag #CMAWorkingInHarmony. If you are posting on Twitter tag @countrymusic @DiscoveryEd and use the hashtag #CMAWorkingInHarmony.*

Disclaimer: "By posting your submission on social media and tagging CMA and Discovery Education, you are granting both entities permission to share your original content via social media platforms."

## MUSIC LESSON CONNECTION

**Consider connecting with a Music Educator for this lesson extension.**

Invite your music teacher to have students prepare/perform music and create an awards show based on musical principles. Categories consist of elements like emotional impact, use of dynamics, technical accuracy, or expressiveness.

# Glossary of Production Terms

- **producer**—organizes and manages the production of the event
- **director**—the leading creative artist on set, who has control and approval over every area of the show
- **script**—a written plan of the words, actions, and set directions for a performance
- **scriptwriter**—writes the script for the MC or host and awards presenters
- **talent**—anyone who performs during the event, like the host or MC (Master of Ceremonies), musicians, presenters, etc.
- **stage manager**—oversees the sets, props, lights, and sound, and facilitates communication between all departments
- **technical**—related to any of the specific fields or crafts that require special skills or knowledge; these may include sound, lighting, video, etc.
- **audio**—having to do with sound or sound recording
- **camera operator**—records or streams video footage of the event
- **lighting designer**—develops a lighting plan, and oversees the placing and management of the lights
- **carpenter**—builds sets, props and stage areas
- **wardrobe**—the costumes that help tell the story of the artist or event
- **glamour**—hair styling and makeup that helps celebrities create their image or story
- **ballot**—a method of expressing your vote digitally or on paper
- **graphics**—the visual concepts for the event that are consistent through all print and digital media
- **marketing**—the campaign to promote the event and interact with users before, during, and after; includes social media, posters, invitations, etc.
- **security**—responsible for maintaining the safety of those at the event
- **red carpet**—an area at the entrance of the event, usually with a red carpet, that allows celebrities to gather and meet their fans and the press before the event
- **audience coordinator**—coordinates the movement of people before, during, and after the event to make sure it runs safely and smoothly
- **music director**—selects music, holds auditions for performers, and oversees the musical elements of the show

# Awards Show

**Directions:** Use your research skills to find and view images and video recordings of various CMA Awards shows. Look for elements and patterns that help make the show successful and find inspiration for the class awards show.

- What is the purpose of the awards show?
- Who is the audience?
- How does the style and tone of the awards show reflect the purpose and audience?
- What is the basic structure of the show?
- Are there any performances or displays of work? What purpose do they serve?
- Is there a host or MC for the awards show? What purpose does that person serve? What makes that person effective or not?
- How are the awards given out? Do the recipients speak when they collect their awards? If so, what does that speech usually include?
- What elements of the show are appealing or worked well?
- What elements of the show did not work well?

# Half the Picture—Discovery Education SOS Strategy, Educator Resource Part 1



# Half the Story—Discovery Education SOS Strategy, Educator Resource Part 2



# Student Resource— Class Vision Board

**Directions:** Think about the vision for your class awards show. Add descriptive words, quotes, pictures, colors, patterns, lists, or anything else that can give you and your classmates inspiration for the event. When someone looks at the board, they should get a sense for the purpose and feel of your show.

<b>Vibe or Feel</b>	<b>Performances and Entertainment</b>
<b>Audience</b>	<b>Values and Focus</b>

**What is the purpose or mission of the event?**

# Department Responsibility Sheet: Production and Management

The Production and Management Department is responsible for overseeing the entire awards event, from wardrobe to seating, and graphics to video broadcasting. There are many people involved in the small details of an event like this, and this department makes sure that everyone is communicating and working towards the ultimate goal and vision. The producers and managers make sure that no task is forgotten and no detail is overlooked. They must be organized, good problem solvers, and excellent listeners.

Use the space below to create a list of tasks your department would be responsible for in the production of your class awards show.



# Job Responsibility Sheet: Production and Management Department

Possible jobs in production and management:

- producer
- director
- audience coordinator
- music director
- art director
- security

Use the space below to decide which jobs need to be filled in your department, who will fill them, and which tasks from the Department Responsibility Sheet they will complete.

Job	Student	Tasks

# Department Responsibility Sheet: Stage and Technical

The Stage and Technical Department is responsible for creating and executing the vision for the stage area. This is the area where all eyes during the event will be directed, so it must reflect the purpose and vision of the show. This department ensures the stage is safe, visible, and attractive. Props, lighting, microphones, speakers, projectors, and screens all fall in the purview of Stage and Technical. The people who work in this department must be detail-oriented and meticulous. They should be creative and skilled, or willing to learn a new skill!

Use the space below to create a list of tasks your department would be responsible for in the production of your class awards show.

# Job Responsibility Sheet: Stage and Technical Department

Possible jobs in stage and technical:

- stage manager
- lighting designer
- music coordinator
- sound operator
- camera operator
- carpenter
- screens programmer

Use the space below to decide which jobs need to be filled in your department, who will fill them, and which tasks from the Department Responsibility Sheet they will complete.

Job	Student	Tasks

# Department Responsibility Sheet: Talent and Scripts

The Talent and Scripts Department is responsible for creating and performing the entertainment during the show. From the host to the performers to the award presenters, this department is the face of the event. Talent and Scripts is responsible for writing and coordinating all the content of the show. The people who make up this department must be comfortable speaking, presenting, or performing in public. They often have musical, comedic, or public speaking talents, and they make sure the show is entertaining while meeting the vision and goals of the event.

Use the space below to create a list of tasks your department would be responsible for in the production of your class awards show.

# Job Responsibility Sheet: Talent and Scripts Department

Possible jobs in talent and scripts:

- scriptwriter
- talent coordinator
- host or MC
- performer
- award presenter

Use the space below to decide which jobs need to be filled in your department, who will fill them, and which tasks from the Department Responsibility Sheet they will complete.

Job	Student	Tasks

# Department Responsibility Sheet: Wardrobe and Glamour

The Wardrobe and Glamour Department is responsible for helping the talent express their individual identities and telling the story of the awards show through costumes, hair, and makeup. They make sure that everyone who will be onstage looks their best and that their appearance aligns with their public image. The people who work in wardrobe and glamour must be creative and skilled. Most importantly, they must be good listeners and collaborators so they can work with other people successfully.

Use the space below to create a list of tasks your department would be responsible for in the production of your class awards show.

# Job Responsibility Sheet: Wardrobe and Glamour Department

Possible jobs in wardrobe and glamour:

- costume designer
- hair stylist
- makeup artist

Use the space below to decide which jobs need to be filled in your department, who will fill them, and which tasks from the Department Responsibility Sheet they will complete.

Job	Student	Tasks

# Department Responsibility Sheet: Media and Marketing

The Media and Marketing Department is responsible for crafting and distributing the message of the awards show. People can't attend or watch if they don't know about it! This department works with the art director and other departments to create programs, invitations, advertising posters, social media graphics and posts, and the messages, images, and visuals that will be displayed on the screen during the show. People who work in this department must be creative and have an eye for design. They should be detail-oriented and able to design print and digital media that supports and promotes the message and vision of the show.

Use the space below to create a list of tasks your department would be responsible for in the production of your class awards show.



# Job Responsibility Sheet: Media and Marketing

Possible jobs in media and marketing:

- graphic designer
- social media marketing
- printer
- copywriter

Use the space below to decide which jobs need to be filled in your department, who will fill them, and which tasks from the Department Responsibility Sheet they will complete.

Job	Student	Tasks