

Working in Harmony

Working in Harmony allows students to discover how STEAM skills come to life, featuring the diverse careers and people that create country music together. Inspire your students to follow their passion and embrace innovative thinking through dynamic collaboration, as you step behind the scenes of country music with your all-access pass to learning!

ABOUT THE VIDEO SERIES

This is STEAM Country is a three-part video topic series that gives you and your students an up-close look at the people behind the stars on stage who make country music work. Like the people and groups that put together a performance or concert, this series will allow teachers to work with their colleagues to create cross-curricular connections. Embedded in the videos are lessons in **Science**, **Technology**, **Engineering**, **Arts**, and **Math**. Although you could do it as a solo artist in your subject field, collaborating with other educators will add to the fun and excitement. Consider collaboration with your school's music teacher, if you have one, to add a new level of interest for the students and some real-world application. Organize your "band" and play!

USING THE VIDEOS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

The videos in this three-part topic series can be used in a variety of ways, depending on the needs of your students and device access. They were designed with flexibility in mind, and can be used in any order, or even independently! Although, we recommend collaborating with other educators to really make the magic happen.

Watch and Discuss: Watch one or more of the videos in class, or assign students to watch independently. Invite students to participate in a follow-up discussion and/or written assignment. Use the discussion and research questions provided for each video, or create your own.

Classroom Activity: Each video has an accompanying classroom activity that should be completed in 45–60 minutes, aligned to national standards. The video is an integral part of each activity, which also includes objectives, standards, career connections, and detailed implementation strategies. Instruction is divided into the following sections:

- **Engage:** An opening activity or discussion that captures students' interest in each topic area.
- **Learn:** Discover the topics that connect directly to national standards.
- **Career Connection:** Access industry professionals that drive home real-world connections into the classroom.
- **Challenge:** Students apply their learning in a collaborative and dynamic activity.
- **Reflect:** Encourage students to consider their learning, the connections they made, and feedback, or think of how to take their learning further.

CONNECTING WITH A MUSIC TEACHER

Music teachers are highly creative individuals, but like all teachers, they are busy people. In the *Music Lesson Extension* section there are ideas to either invite the music teacher to collaborate with you or to expand learning further, through music education. Music is a universal language that brings people together for a common feeling or purpose; these videos are a great way to start collaborating with your colleagues while making real-world connections to the music industry.

If you have a passion for teaching music education, learn more about the [CMA Foundation](#) and their support for music education.



LESSON 1

Sounds of STEAM Country

[View full companion lesson](#)

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- **Engage** in a hands-on exploration to learn about sound energy.
- **Discover** how energy is transferred.
- **Apply knowledge** learned about producing sound, wavelengths, patterns, and frequency to create a garage band show/music concert.

OVERVIEW

Drawing on the video, featuring Aaron Farmer, in the CMA Video Topic Series, students will step into the shoes of a music director, embarking upon the journey of exploring and gathering evidence to understand the unique sounds of country music. Students will discover how energy is transferred, and will engage in a hands-on exploration to learn about sound energy. Through research of the history and sound of country music, students will learn how objects produce sound, wavelengths, patterns, and frequency. Students will connect this to mathematics and be introduced to wave frequency as it relates to decibels, echo, and noise reduction. Throughout this activity, students will practice using the skills needed to be a music producer and work in harmony with other music professionals.

KEY STUDENT QUESTIONS

- What is sound energy? How is sound energy used to create country music?
- How does math connect to sounds waves?
- What are some examples of things that vibrate to make a sound?
- What is the loudest sound you ever heard?
- What is the quietest sound you ever heard?

CAREER CONNECTION—AARON FARMER

Students will take a deep dive into the work of Aaron Farmer and how he uses sound to produce music.

TEAM SKILLS PRACTICED

Communication, leadership, problem solving, organization, patience, teamwork, and creativity.

MUSIC LESSON EXTENSIONS



If you have access to a great music teacher, invite them to work with you on extending the lesson. If you do not have a music teacher available, here are some ideas for how you could expand learning and further embed music education into your classroom:

- Consider having students use instruments like drums, xylophones, or recorders to help them create their own “band.” Students can feel the energy and hear the sounds coming from the instruments. They can also see how playing together changes those sounds. If instruments are not available, students can create their own instruments using glass cups, combs, and other available objects.
- Give students background information on different types or styles of country music and talk about their different characteristics. Share examples from bluegrass, honkytonk, classic country, country rock, and more. Discuss how music has evolved through history.
- Create a timeline of how country music has changed throughout the years. Students can discover early “Western and Cowboy” songs available at the Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/songs-of-america/articles-and-essays/musical-styles/popular-songs-of-the-day/western-and-cowboy-songs/> to compare with more modern songs. Students can discuss what events in history may have played a role in the changing sounds of country music.
- Have students compare and contrast instruments used in various sounds of country music. Choose specific artists to denote the various sounds of country music. For example, students could compare an early Grand Ole Opry member like Roy Acuff with more current members like Blake Shelton or Keith Urban.
- Working in small groups, students could listen to specific artists and discuss what makes that sound unique, or they could compare two different songs/artists and determine what instruments and sounds make them different.

LESSON 2

Light It Up: STEAM Country

View full companion lesson

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- **Engage** in hands-on exploration by creating a lightning design to support a piece of country music.
- **Discover** how lighting creates or enhances the mood of a performance.
- **Apply** knowledge obtained about country music performance lighting and the effect it has on the overall concert experience.

How does a Lighting Director use the properties of light to enhance a concert experience? In this lesson, students will get a backstage pass to “The Ultimate Country Music Experience,” [CMA Fest](#). Using their backstage pass, students will have the opportunity to step into the role of a Lighting Designer for a musical performance. They will create a prototype to enhance a piece of music and build on the mood, using their knowledge of the properties of light. Students will use a video featuring Alec Takahashi from the CMA Video Topic Series: *This is STEAM Country*. This video showcases how Alec uses lighting effects to enhance the country music experience for all audience members. Students will also discover what it takes to become a Lighting Director and Show Designer, as well as the skills needed in order to be successful within this role. Alec is responsible for designing and executing the full visual spectacle that live performances offer for Thomas Rhett, who performed at CMA Fest and is also featured in the Topic Series Video.

KEY STUDENT QUESTIONS

- What is “light,” and how is it produced and synchronized at a live performance?
- Why does light play a vital role in making a live musical performance such a powerful emotional experience?

CAREER CONNECTION—ALEC TAKAHASHI, LIGHTING DIRECTOR

Students will discover what a Lighting Director and Lighting Designer does and how Alec Takahashi uses the science of lighting to design a musical experience.

TEAM SKILLS PRACTICED

Communication, problem solving, collaboration, organization, and creativity.

MUSICAL LESSON EXTENSIONS



If you have access to a great music teacher, invite them to work with you on extending the lesson. If you do not have a music teacher available, here are some ideas for how you could expand learning and further embed music education into your classroom:

- Consider watching scenes from music videos with the sound off to determine the tone they think the lighting would represent. Make sure to preview all videos prior to viewing with students to ensure that the video is appropriate for your classroom audience.
- Have students read age-appropriate lyrics to try to determine what mood they think should be created, using lighting. Then have students view a video of the song to see if they matched the opinion of that lighting director. An example might be the song, "If I Was a Cowboy" by 2022 CMA Entertainer of the Year Nominee Miranda Lambert. A contrasting song from the same artist would be "The House That Built Me."
- Students could design lighting for a concert or musical, which would be a real-world application of the lesson they learned through this activity. They would need to determine: How would the setting of a concert be affected by the lights used? How could a concert be staged to create a mood fitting the content?
- Effectiveness of a spotlight: Using a flashlight and a shaded classroom, students could create various spotlight opportunities. Students could use markers over clear kitchen plastic wrap to experiment with different colors. Students would answer the question: when would a spotlight be appropriate in a song and what mood does it create?

LESSON 3

Country Music Entrepreneurs

[View full companion lesson](#)

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- **Engage** by collecting and analyzing data.
- **Discover** the importance of experiential marketing while making career connections.
- **Apply knowledge** obtained to design an experiential marketing experience.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will explore and apply mathematical principles to learn about experiential marketing and understand how data drives daily decisions in marketing. Students will meet Lindsay Bertelli, to explore the fundamentals of experiential marketing and discover experiential marketing in action. They will develop a marketing experience for an upcoming event; such as a local concert, community event, or school event. Students will research the math data for the type of customer/consumer that would attend the event using the components of experiential marketing. Through research and data synthesis, students will consider how to implement marketing concepts. Utilizing data collection and analysis, students will identify target consumers and factors that drive attendance or product sales.

Throughout this activity, students will practice using the skills needed to be an experiential marketing manager and produce fun, thought-provoking marketing campaigns. These skills include but are not limited to communication, leadership, problem solving, organization, patience, teamwork, and creativity.

KEY STUDENT QUESTIONS

What is experiential marketing? What are the key principles of experiential marketing? What role does statistics play in experiential marketing?

CAREER CONNECTION—LINDSAY BERTELLI

Meet entrepreneur Lindsay Bertelli and discover how she built an experimental marketing company from the ground up. Learn how her team create meaningful experiences to create brand awareness and connections between people and products.

TEAM SKILLS PRACTICED

Communication, leadership, problem solving, organization, patience, teamwork, and creativity.

MUSICAL LESSON EXTENSIONS



If you have access to a great music teacher, invite them to work with you on extending the lesson. If you do not have a music teacher available, here are some ideas for how you could expand learning and further embed music education into your classroom:

- One important component of concerts and musicals is creating awareness around the actual event. How can experiential marketing be used to publicize an event and also encourage people to attend. How would marketing affect attendance? Have students create a marketing plan for a musical event in school with the goal of increasing awareness and attendance.
- Have students research trailers or posters that advertise concerts or musical events. Then, have students decide if the marketing for these events was successful and why or why not?
- Have students consider what experiences could be added to a performance that would make people more likely to attend? How could you bring data from market research into your performance to boost attendance?
- Have students listen to multiple songs from an artist to determine how they would create a marketing experience or plan for that artist. Students should choose a short clip of the music to include and place it strategically within the multi-sensory experience.