Student Listening Guide
Elementary School Level

Listening is more than hearing music. Listening can be an active process by which students receive, construct meaning from as well as respond to and about music. As such, listening is an integral part of understanding, comprehending and appreciating music. Listening comprehension enhances musical comprehension and understanding.

Every type of music, whether classical, contemporary or jazz, has its unique qualities but all stem from the same basic material and foundation. Teachers can help students become effective listeners by making them aware of the different kinds, purposes and qualities of listening. The first step is to understand the different approaches to listening as described here:

**Comprehensive Listening:** Understanding the elements used to achieve the effect. Understanding the overall effect and synergy of the music.

**Critical (Evaluative) Listening:** The breaking down of the composition.
Examining each element of the composition and its role in the structure.

**Appreciative (Aesthetic) Listening:** Allowing the music to simply be in the room.

**Therapeutic (Empathetic) Listening:** The emotional part of the music.
Listening produces a response that is individual to the person. No analyzing is necessary in this form of listening, as the individual is drawn into the composition fully.

This Student Listening Guide can be utilized with activity guides or independently and encourages students to listen in all four ways. This is intended to allow for the complete understanding of the music while remaining rooted in a common musical foundation. Students are encouraged to listen as critically as possible in order to understand the music being studied.

**Wisconsin’s Model Academic Standards for Music:** This listening guide corresponds with the following Model Academic Standards for Music:

**Music Response:**
Analysis - F.4.1-6
Evaluation - G.4.1-3

**Music Connections:**
The Arts - H.4.1-2
History and Culture - I.4.1-5
Analysis and Evaluation: We learn to understand music when we understand how the elements are organized. The ability to analyze music is the foundation for understanding. This ability enables listeners to make informed decisions and develop appreciation for the music he/she hears or performs.

- Sounds: Listen to the combination and use of sounds (including voice) and how composers use sounds to build a soundscape. This discovery of sounds and contrasts while using the same available source results in a variety of contrasts and textures.

Activity: Identify the instruments that you hear in the recording:

1. Brass Family: __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

2. Woodwind Family: _______________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

3. Strings Family: _________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

4. Percussion Family: _______________________________________ 
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

5. Other Sounds Heard: ____________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

Identify the type of ensemble by the sounds of instruments that you hear:

_____ Concert Band   _____ Orchestra
_____ Choir           _____ Jazz Ensemble
_____ Other ________________________________

- Elements of Music: The elements of music are in all musical styles. Understanding the musical elements allows for more understanding by the listener. This will allow the listener to think and hear as the composer did.

  - Melody: Students should draw the contour of the melody with his/her finger in the air.
• Harmony: Students should describe the character of the harmony in terms of major or minor by using comparable descriptive words such as sad, happy etc.
• Rhythm: Students should keep the beat with the music. Identify if it is a duple or triple feel or something uneven.
• Tone Color: Describe the tone colors heard, how they are different and how they are the same.
• Form: Assign a shape (circle, square, triangle for ex.) to each section to visually recognize sections.
• Expression: Draw the contour of the volume on paper and assign different colors to each volume level.

Activity: Discuss the Six (6) Elements of Music and the relationship to this composition:

1. Melody: ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

2. Harmony: ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

3. Rhythm: ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

4. Tone Color: ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

5. Form: ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

6. Expression: ______________________________________
   ______________________________________

Activity: Discuss the Overall Effect of the Music:

A. Draw the shape of the music. Are there multiple highpoints or just one?

B. Describe the music to a friend. Be sure to include a story if the music tells you a story.

C. How does the music make you feel? What about the music made you feel that way?

D. Does the music sound like anything you have heard before?
E. Does the music connect with you? Why or why not?

The Arts: Building bridges between music, art, theater and sports will allow students to understand our world as a whole. This will make the music come to life for the listener more fully.

Activity: Discuss or Complete the Following:
   A. Find a piece of art that comes from the same time as the music. What is similar? What is different?
   B. Find inventions or discoveries from the same time as the music. Are they related? Are they unrelated?
   C. Learn about scientists, inventors, writers and mathematicians from the same time as the music. Are they similar? Are they different? How?

History and Culture: Music, history and culture are connected. By looking at the music we can see the present and the past. By looking at music, history and culture we can understand music better.

Activity: Discuss or Complete the Following:
   A. What was going on at the same time and/or the same country that the music was written? Did the other event affect the music or did the music affect the other event?
   B. Develop a timeline showing big events in history from the same time as the music was written.
   C. If the music is from a different country, what was happening in the United State of America when the music was written?
   D. What is the story behind the music? If there is no story, what does the music make you see in your mind?
   E. Learn about the composer that wrote the music. Who were his/her friends? Where did he/she live? What else did he/she do besides write music?
   F. Listen to other music from the same time. How is it the same? How is it different?
   G. If the composer is still alive, visit his/her website and find out where he/she lives. Send a letter to the composer asking about the music and what he/she was thinking when it was written.