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

Every genre of music, whether classical, contemporary or jazz in nature, 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 (Informational) Listening:** Discerning the intent of the composition while considering 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 to a structural level. Examining each element of the composition and its role in the overall structure.

**Appreciative (Aesthetic) Listening:** Allowing the music to simply be in the room and part of the surroundings without consideration or analysis.

**Therapeutic (Empathetic) Listening:** Gaining an emotional understanding of the intent of the composition. Listening produces an emotional 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.12.1-4
Evaluation - G.12.1-3

**Music Connections:**
The Arts - H.12.1-4
History and Culture - I.12.1-3
**Analysis and Evaluation:** Students learn to appreciate music when he/she understands 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.

- **Instrumentation:** Examine the combination and utilization of instrumentation (including voice) and how composers explore soundscapes. This exploration of sounds and contrasts while all using the same available timbres results in a wide variety of contrasts and textures.

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

1. **Brass:** ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

2. **Woodwind:** ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

3. **Strings:** ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

4. **Percussion:** ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

5. **Other:** ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

Identify the type of ensemble indicated by the combination of instruments:

- _____ Concert Band
- _____ Orchestra
- _____ Choir
- _____ Jazz Ensemble
- _____ Other ____________________________

Discuss the textures and contrasts found in the music. Be sure to describe how the composer is able to achieve these effects in the music:

1. **Contrasts:**
2. Textures:

- **Elements of Music:** The elements of music are consistent to all musical styles. Understanding the elements and exploring the relationship between musical elements allows for a deeper understanding by the listener. This knowledge will allow the listener to think and hear as the composer envisioned.
  - Melody: Describe characteristics and structure.
  - Harmony: Describe attributes and progression.
  - Rhythm: Describe choices made by the arranger and the effect.
  - Tone Color: Describe the tone colors used and purpose.
  - Form: Describe the structure, purpose and results.
  - Expression: Describe elements used.

**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. What is the overall shape of the selection?

B. Are there multiple highpoints or just one?

C. How would you describe this selection to another person?

D. How does the music make you feel?

E. Does the selection sound like anything you have heard before?

F. What is the emotional impact of the music?

G. Does the music make a connection with you as the listener? Why or why not?

**The Arts:** Relating music to the other arts, as well as disciplines outside the arts, enhances understanding. Building connections allows for the understanding of a culture as a whole and the relationships of the parts. Be sure to consider art, theater, literature, fashion, pop culture, television, politics and any other cultural influence.

**Activity: Discuss or Complete the Following:**

A. Compare and contrast the musical composition to other art forms from the same time period.

B. Compare and contrast the highlights of other disciplines from the same time as the musical composition.

C. Research contemporaries of the composer from the other disciplines. Consider science, literature, math, politics, etc.

**History and Culture:** Music reflects historical events and cultural relationships that are connected to the present and an indicator of the past. By relating music to history and culture there is greater understanding of the music.

**Activity: Discuss or Complete the Following:**

A. What historical events occurred when the music was composed?

B. Develop a timeline indicating historical and cultural events from the same time as the music was written.

C. Is the selection programmatic in nature? If it is programmatic, what is the story behind the music? If it is not programmatic, is there another basis for the composition?
D. Research historical information on the composer.

E. Compare and contrast other music from the same musical period.