



CLASS ACTIVITY (SOCIALY DISTANT): DRAW WHAT YOU HEAR - MAJOR OR MINOR?

OVERVIEW

In this activity, students will explore the aural differences between major and minor keys and how they affect the overall mood and theme of a piece of music.

MATERIALS: Paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Begin by reviewing the differences in sound and mood between major and minor keys. Major keys generally sound joyful and upbeat, while minor keys tend to sound sad and dark. Play one of the pieces listed below for the class to listen and respond to. Have the class discuss whether they think the piece is major or minor, and why. Here are some questions to help prompt their discussion:

- Does the piece sound happy or sad?
- Is the piece fast or slow?
- What do you think this piece might be about?
- What colors might you associate with this piece?
- What type of weather or season did this piece remind you of?

Once the class has discussed the first piece, play another piece from the lists below. This time students will decide independently whether the piece is major or minor. Based on their answer, they will draw a picture illustrating the sound and mood of the piece. Once they have completed their pictures, have the students discuss as a class what they drew and why they believe it portrays the major or minor tonality of the piece. Choose another piece from the lists below and repeat the activity.

MAJOR

[GERSHWIN – *An American in Paris*](#)

[COPLAND – “Hoedown” from *Rodeo*](#)

[HOLST – “Jupiter: the Bringer of Jollity” from *The Planets*](#)

MINOR

[MOZART – *Requiem Mass in D minor – VI. Lacrimosa*](#)

[SHOSTAKOVICH – *Symphony No. 5 Op. 47 – Largo*](#)

[GRIEG – “Solveig’s Song” from *Peer Gynt*](#)