

# Equality - Lesson Plan

By Franklin Willis

## Objective

Students will understand the message of the poem Equality by Maya Angelou and be able to express it through music.

## Guiding Questions

- What is equality?
- What are some of the key themes in the poem "Equality"?
- How can the poem be used to discuss the importance of equality in our society?
- What are some of the ways in which the poem can help us to better understand and appreciate the value of diversity?

## Materials

- Printed copies of the poem Equality by Maya Angelou
- Instruments (drums, xylophones, non-pitched percussion, etc)

This lesson can be taught over three classes:

- Pre-Lesson & Discussion
- Introduction of the Song Equality
- Student Composition & Conclusion

## Informal Assessment

- Observation
- Oral presentations
- Demonstrations
- Writing

# First Class: Pre-Lesson & Discussion

**Procedure:** Refer to the guiding questions to facilitate discussion.

**Pre-Lesson Writing Prompt:** What does the word equality mean to you?

1. Introduce the poem Equality by Maya Angelou and ask the students what they think it means.
2. Read the poem aloud to the students and then have a discussion about the message of the poem.
3. Ask the students to brainstorm ways that they can express the poem's message through music.

# Second Class: Introduction of the Song Equality

**Procedure:** You know your students best, decide which ostinato rhythms that your students can perform.

1. Introduce the melody of the song Equality by call and response.
2. Introduce the ostinato rhythms by call and response.
3. Group students in 1 melody group and 4 ostinato rhythm groups
4. Instruct each group to practice their part independently (rhythm of the words)
5. Combine ostinato rhythm #1 with the melody of the song
6. Repeat for the other 3 ostinato rhythm parts

# Third Class: Student Composition & Conclusion

**Procedure:** this class is all about student ownership and creativity. Encourage students to share their music with each other.

1. Give the students a few minutes to create a melody or rhythm that expresses the poem's message.
2. Have each student share their creation and provide constructive feedback.
3. Have the students come together to combine the different pieces they have created and form a full musical expression of the poem.
4. Have the students perform the musical expression and discuss what they have learned.

## Conclusion

At the end of the activity, ask the students to reflect on the poem Equality by Maya Angelou and what they have learned. Allow them to share their thoughts with the class.

**Post Lesson Writing Prompt:** After listening to the poem and learning the song, what is your definition of equality now?